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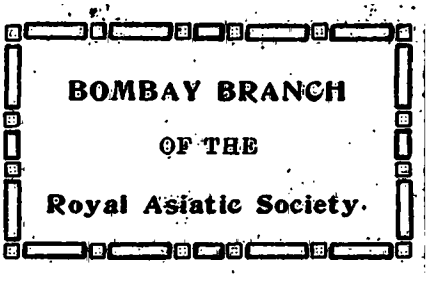

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BLICAL COMMENTARY

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LD TESTAMENT.

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KS OF EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER,

BY

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THE BOOK OF EZRA.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. NAME AND CONTENTS, OBJECT AND PLAN OF THE BOOK OF EZRA.

THE book of Ezra derives its name of עֶזְרָא in the Hebrew Bible, of Ἔσδρας in the Septuagint, and of *Liber Esdræ* in the Vulgate, from Ezra, עֶזְרָא, the priest and scribe who, in chap. vii.–x., narrates his return from captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem, and the particulars of his ministry in the latter city. For the sake of making the number of the books contained in their canon of Scripture correspond with the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, the Jews had from of old reckoned the books of Ezra and Nehemiah as *one;* whilst an apocryphal book of Ezra, composed of passages from the second book of Chronicles, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and certain popular legends, had long been current among the Hellenistic Jews together with the canonical book of Ezra. Hence our book of Ezra is called, in the catalogues of the Old Testament writings handed down to us by the Fathers (see the statements of Origen, of the Council of Laodicea, Can. 60, of Cyril, Jerome, and others, in the *Lehrbuch der Einleitung*, § 216, Not. 11, 13); Ἔσδρας πρῶτος (*α*), and the book of Nehemiah Ἔσδρας δεύτερος (*β*), and consequently separated as I. Ezra from the book of Nehemiah as II. Ezra; while the Greek book of Ezra is called III. Ezra, to which was subsequently added the falsely so-called book of Ezra as

IV. Ezra. In the Septuagint, the *Vet. Itala*, and the Syriac, on the contrary (comp. *Libri V. T. apocryphi syriace e recogn..de Lagarde*), we find the Greek book of Ezra placed as Ἔσδρας πρῶτον before the canonical book, and the latter designated Ἔσδρας δεύτερον.

The book of Ezra consists of two parts. The first part, comprising a period anterior to Ezra, begins with the edict of Coresh (Cyrus), king of Persia, permitting the return to their native land of such Jews as were exiles in Babylon, and prescribing the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem (i. 1–4); and relates that when the heads of the nation, the priests and Levites, and many of the people, made preparations for returning, Cyrus had the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem brought forth and delivered to Sheshbazzar (Zerubbabel), prince of Judah (i. 5–11). Next follows a list of the names of those who returned from captivity (chap. ii.), and the account of the building of the altar of burnt-offerings, the restoration of divine worship, and the laying of the foundation of the temple (chap. iii.). Then the manner in which the rebuilding of the temple was hindered by the Samaritans is narrated; and mention made of the written accusation sent by the adversaries of the Jews to the kings Ahashverosh and Artachshasta (iv. 1–7): the letter sent to the latter monarch, and his answer thereto, in consequence of which the rebuilding of the temple ceased till the second year of Darius, being inserted in the Chaldee original (iv. 24). It is then related (also in Chaldee) that Zerubbabel and Joshua, undertaking, in consequence of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, the rebuilding of the temple, were immediately interrogated by Tatnai the Persian governor and his companions as to who had commanded such rebuilding; that the reply of the Jewish rulers was reported in writing to the king, whereupon the latter caused search to be made for the edict of Cyrus, and gave command for the continuance and furtherance of the building in compliance therewith (v. 1–vi. 13); that hence the Jews were enabled to complete the work, solemnly to dedicate their

now finished temple (vi. 14–18), and (as further related, vers. 19–22, in the Hebrew tongue) to celebrate their passover with rejoicing. In the second part (vii.–x.), the return of Ezra the priest and scribe, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, from Babylon to Jerusalem, with a number of priests, Levites, and Israelites, is related; and (vii. 1–10) a copy of the royal decree, in virtue of which Ezra was entrusted with the ordering of divine worship, and of the administration of justice as prescribed in the law, given in the Chaldee original (vii. 11–26), with a postscript by Ezra (ver. 27 sq.). Then follows a list of those who went up with Ezra (viii. 1–14); and particulars given by Ezra himself concerning his journey, his arrival at Jerusalem (viii. 14–36), and the energetic proceedings by which he effected the separation of the heathen women from the congregation (ix. 1–x. 17); the book concluding with a list of those who were forced to put away their heathen wives (x. 18–44).

The first year of the rule of Cyrus king of Persia corresponding with the year 536 B.C., and the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Longimanus) with 458 B.C., it follows that this book comprises a period of at least eighty years. An interval of fifty-six years, extending from the seventh year of Darius Hystaspis, in which the passover was celebrated after the dedication of the new temple (vi. 19–22), to the seventh of Artaxerxes, in which Ezra went up from Babylon (vii. 6), separates the events of the first part from those of the second. The narrative of the return of Ezra from Babylon in vii. 1 is nevertheless connected with the celebration of the passover under Darius by the usual formula of transition, "Now after these things," without further comment, because nothing had occurred in the intervening period which the author of the book felt it necessary, in conformity with the plan of his work, to communicate.

Even this cursory notice of its contents shows that the *object* of Ezra was not to give a history of the re-settlement in Judah and Jerusalem of the Jews liberated by Cyrus from the Babylonian captivity, nor to relate all the memorable events which took place from the departure and the arrival

in Judah of those who returned with Zerubbabel and Joshua, until his own return and his ministry in Jerusalem. For he tells us nothing at all of the journey of the first band of returning exiles, and so little concerning their arrival in Jerusalem and Judah, that this has merely a passing notice in the superscription of the list of their names; while at the close of this list he only mentions the voluntary gifts which they brought with them for the temple service, and then just remarks that they—the priests, Levites, people, etc.—dwelt in their cities (ii. 70). The following chapters (iii.–vi.), moreover, treat exclusively of the building of the altar of burnt-offering and the temple, the hindrances by which this building was delayed for years, and of the final removal of these hindrances, the continuation and completion of the building, and the dedication of the new temple, by means of which the tribe of Judah was enabled to carry on the worship of God according to the law, and to celebrate the festivals in the house of the Lord. In the second part, indeed, after giving the decree he had obtained from Artaxerxes, he speaks in a comparatively circumstantial manner of the preparations he made for his journey, of the journey itself, and of his arrival at Jerusalem; while he relates but a single incident of his proceedings there,—an incident, indeed, of the utmost importance with respect to the preservation of the returned community as a covenant people, viz. the dissolution of the marriages with Canaanites and other Gentile women, forbidden by the law, but contracted in the period immediately following his arrival at Jerusalem. Of his subsequent proceedings there we learn nothing further from his own writings, although the king had given him authority, "after the wisdom of his God, to set magistrates and judges" (vii. 25); while the book of Nehemiah testifies that he continued his ministry there for some years in conjunction with Nehemiah, who did not arrive till thirteen years later: comp. Neh. viii.–x. and xii. 36, 38.

Such being the nature of the contents of this book, it is evident that the *object* and *plan* of its author must have been

to collect only such facts and documents as might show the manner in which the Lord God, after the lapse of the seventy years of exile, fulfilled His promise announced by the prophets, by the deliverance of His people from Babylon, the building of the temple at Jerusalem, and the restoration of the temple worship according to the law, and preserved the re-assembled community from fresh relapses into heathen customs and idolatrous worship by the dissolution of the marriages with Gentile women. Moreover, the restoration of the temple and of the legal temple worship, and the separation of the heathen from the newly settled community, were necessary and indispensable conditions for the gathering out of the people of God from among the heathen, and for the maintenance and continued existence of the nation of Israel, to which and through which God might at His own time fulfil and realize His promises made to their forefathers, to make their seed a blessing to all the families of the earth, in a manner consistent both with His dealings with this people hitherto, and with the further development of His promises made through the prophets. The significance of the book of Ezra in sacred history lies in the fact that it enables us to perceive how the Lord, on the one hand, so disposed the hearts of the kings of Persia, the then rulers of the world, that in spite of all the machinations of the enemies of God's people, they promoted the building of His temple in Jerusalem, and the maintenance of His worship therein; and on the other, raised up for His people, when delivered from Babylon, men like Zerubbabel their governor, Joshua the high priest, and Ezra the scribe, who, supported by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, undertook the work to which they were called, with hearty resolution, and carried it out with a powerful hand.

§ 2. UNITY AND COMPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF EZRA.

Several modern critics (Zunz, Ewald, Bertheau, and others) have raised objections both to the single authorship and to the independent character of this book, and declared

it to be but a fragment of a larger work, comprising not only the book of Nehemiah, but that of Chronicles also. The section of this work which forms our canonical book of Ezra is said to have been composed and edited by some unknown author about 200 years after Ezra, partly from an older Chaldee history of the building of the temple and of the walls of Jerusalem, partly from a record drawn up by Ezra himself of his agency in Jerusalem, and from certain other public documents. The evidence in favour of this hypothesis is derived, first, from the fact that not only the official letters to the Persian kings, and their decrees (iv. 8–22, v. 6–17, vi. 6–12, vii. 12–26), but also a still longer section on the building of the temple (v. 23–vi. 18), are written in the Chaldee, and the remaining portions in the Hebrew language; next, from the diversity of its style, its lack of internal unity, and its want of finish; and, finally, from the circumstance that the book of Ezra had from of old been combined with that of Nehemiah as one book. These reasons, however, upon closer consideration, prove too weak to confirm this view. For, to begin with the historical testimony, Nägelsbach, in *Herzog's Realencycl.* iv. p. 166, justly finds it "incomprehensible" that Bertheau should appeal to the testimony of the Talmud, the Masora, the most ancient catalogues of Old Testament books in the Christian church, the Cod. Alexandr., the Cod. Friderico Aug., and the LXX., because the comprehension of the two books in one in these authorities is entirely owing to the Jewish mode of computing the books of the Old Testament. Even Josephus (*c. Ap.* i. 8) reckons twenty-two books, which he arranges, in a manner peculiar to himself, into five books of Moses, thirteen of the prophets, and four containing hymns to God and moral precepts for man; and Jerome says, in *Prol. Gal.*, that the Hebrews reckon twenty-two canonical books, whose names he cites, after the number of the letters of their alphabet, but then adds that some reckoned Ruth and Lamentations separately, thus making twenty-four, because the Rabbis distinguished between ו and ו, and received a double Jod (י) into the alphabet for the sake of including in

it the name יהוה, which when abbreviated is written י. The number twenty-four is also found in *Baba bathr.* fol. 14. Hence we also find these numbers and computations in the Fathers and in the resolutions of the councils, but with the express distinction of I. and II. Ezra. This distinction is not indeed mentioned in the Talmud; and *Baba bathr., l.c.*, says: *Esra scripsit librum suum et genealogias librorum Chron. usque ad sua tempora.* But what authority can there be in such testimony, which also declares Moses to have been the author not only of the Pentateuch, but also of the book of Job, and Samuel the author of the books of Judges, Ruth, and Samuel? The authority, too, of Cod. Alex. and Cod. Frid. Aug. is opposed to that of Cod. Vatic. and of the LXX., in which the books Ezra and Nehemiah are separated, as they likewise are in the Masoretic text, although the Masoretes regarded and reckoned both as forming but one book.[1] This mode of computation, however, affords no ground for the supposition that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah originally formed one work. For in this case we should be obliged to regard the books of the twelve minor prophets as the work of one author. If the number of books was to be reduced to twenty-two or twenty-four, it was necessary to combine smaller works of similar character. The single authorship of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is most decidedly negatived, not only by the superscription of the latter book, דִּבְרֵי נְחֶמְיָה בֶּן־חֲכַלְיָה, there being in the entire Old Testament no other instance of a single portion or section of a longer work being distinguished from its other portions by a similar superscription, with the name of the author; but also by the fact already brought forward in the introduction to Chronicles, p. 23, that no reason or motive whatever can

[1] Though Zunz and Ewald appeal also to the Greek book of Ezra, in which portions of Chronicles and of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are comprised, it is not really to be understood how any critical importance can be attributed to this apocryphal compilation. Besides, even if it possessed such importance, the circumstance that only the two last chapters of Chronicles, and only vii. 73–viii. 13 of Nehemiah, are comprised in it, says more against than in favour of the assumed single authorship of the three canonical books.

be perceived for a subsequent division of the historical work in question into three separate books, on account of its reception into the canon.

The contents, too, and the form of this book, present us with nothing incompatible either with its single authorship or independence. The use of the Chaldee tongue for the official documents of the Persian kings and their subordinates cannot surprise us, this being the official language in the provinces of the Persian empire west of the Euphrates, and as current with the returning Jews as their Hebrew mother tongue. It is true that the use of the Chaldee language is not in this book confined merely to official documents, but continued, iv. 8–22, in the narrative of the building of the temple down to the dedication of the rebuilt temple, iv. 23–vi. 18; and that the Hebrew is not employed again till from vi. 19 to the conclusion of the book, with the exception of vii. 12–26, where the commission given by Artaxerxes to Ezra is inserted in the Chaldee original. We also meet, however, with the two languages in the book of Daniel, chap. ii., where the Magi are introduced, ver. 4, as answering the king in Aramaic, and where not only their conversation with the monarch, but also the whole course of the event, is given in this dialect, which is again used chap. iii.–vii. Hence it has been attempted to account for the use of the Chaldee in the narrative portions of the book of Ezra, by the assertion that the historian, after quoting Chaldee documents, found it convenient to use this language in the narrative combined therewith, and especially because during its course he had to communicate other Chaldee documents (chap. v. 6–17 and vi. 3–12) in the original. But this explanation is not sufficient to solve the problem. Both here and in the book of Daniel, the use of the two languages has a really deeper reason; see § 14 sq. on Daniel. With respect to the book in question, this view is, moreover, insufficient; because, in the first place, the use of the Chaldee tongue does not begin with the communication of the Chaldee documents (iv. 11), but is used, ver. 8, in the paragraph which introduces them. And then, too, the narrator of the

Chaldee historical section, chap. v. 4, gives us to understand, by his use of the first person, "Then said *we* unto them," that he was a participator in the work of rebuilding the temple under Darius; and this, Ezra, who returned to Jerusalem at a much later period, and who relates his return (chap. vii. 27) in the first person, could not himself have been. These two circumstances show that the Chaldee section, iv. 8–vi. 18, was composed by an eye-witness of the occurrences it relates; that it came into the hands of Ezra when composing his own work, who, finding it adapted to his purpose as a record by one who was contemporary with the events he related, and a sharer in the building of the temple, included it in his own book with very slight alteration. The mention of Artachshasta, besides Coresh and Darjavesh, in vi. 14, seems opposed to this view. But since neither Ezra, nor a later author of this book, contemporary with Darius Hystaspis, could cite the name of Artaxerxes as contributing towards the *building* of the temple, while the position of the name of Artaxerxes after that of Darius, as well as its very mention, contradicts the notion of a predecessor of King Darius, the insertion of this name in vi. 14 may be a later addition made by Ezra, in grateful retrospect of the splendid gifts devoted by Artaxerxes to the temple, for the purpose of associating him with the two monarchs whose favour rendered the rebuilding of the temple possible (see on vi. 14). In this case, the mention of Artaxerxes in the passage just cited, offers no argument against the above-mentioned view of the origin of the Chaldee section. Neither is any doubt cast upon the single authorship of the whole book by the notion that Ezra inserted in his book not only an authentic list of the returned families, chap. ii., but also a narrative of the building of the temple, composed in the Chaldee tongue by an eye-witness.

All the other arguments brought forward against the unity of this book are quite unimportant. The variations and discrepancies which Schrader, in his treatise on the duration of the second temple, in the *Theol. Studien u. Kritiken*, 1867, p. 460 sq., and in De Wette's *Einleitung*, 8th

edit. § 235, supposes he has discovered in the Chaldee section, first between chap. iv. 8–23 and v. 1–6, 14*a*, 15, on the one hand, and chap. iv. 24 on the other, and then between these passages and the remaining chapters of the first part, chap. i., iii., iv. 1, vii. 24, and chap. vi. 14*b*, 16–18, 19–22, can have no force of argument except for a criticism which confines its operations to the words and letters of the text of Scripture, because incapable of entering into its spiritual meaning. If the two public documents iv. 8–23 differ from what precedes and follows them, by the fact that they speak not of the building of the temple but of the building of the walls of Jerusalem, the reason may be either that the adversaries of the Jews brought a false accusation before King Artachshashta, and for the sake of more surely gaining their own ends, represented the building of the temple as a building of the fortifications, or that the complaint of their enemies and the royal decree really relate to the building of the walls, and that section iv. 8–23 is erroneously referred by expositors to the building of the temple. In either case there is no such discrepancy between these public documents and what precedes and follows them as to annul the single authorship of this Chaldee section; see the explanation of the passage. Still less does the circumstance that the narrative of the continuation and completion of the temple-building, v. 1–vi. 15, is in a simply historical style, and not interspersed with reflections or devotional remarks, offer any proof that the notice, iv. 24, "Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem, so it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia," and the information, vi. 16–18, that the Jews brought offerings at the dedication of the temple, and appointed priests and Levites in their courses for the service of God, cannot proceed from the same historian, who at the *building* of the temple says nothing of the offerings and ministrations of the priests and Levites. Still weaker, if possible, is the argument for different authorship derived from characteristic expressions, viz. that in iv. 8, 11, 23, v. 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 17, and vi. 1, 3, 12, 13, the Persian kings are simply called "the

king," and not "king of Persia," as they are designated by the historian in iv. 7, 24, and elsewhere. For a thoughtful reader will scarcely need to be reminded that, in a letter to the king, the designation king of Persia would be not only superfluous, but inappropriate, while the king in his answer would have still less occasion to call himself king of Persia, and that even the historian has in several places — *e.g.* v. 5, 6, vi. 1 and 13—omitted the addition "of Persia" when naming the king. Nor is there any force in the remark that in v. 13 Coresh is called king of Babylon. This epithet, דִּי בָבֶל, would only be objected to by critics who either do not know or do not consider that Coresh was king of Persia twenty years before he became king of Babylon, or obtained dominion over the Babylonian empire. The title king of Persia would here be misleading, and the mere designation king inexact,—Cyrus having issued the decree for the rebuilding of the temple not in the first year of his reign or rule over Persia, but in the first year of his sway over Babylon.

In Part II. (chap. vii.–x.), which is connected with Part I. by the formula of transition אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, it is not indeed found "striking" that the historian should commence his narrative concerning Ezra by simply relating his doings (vii. 1–10), his object being first to make the reader acquainted with the person of Ezra. It is also said to be easy to understand, that when the subsequent royal epistles are given, Ezra should be spoken of in the third person; that the transition to the first person should not be made until the thanksgiving to God (vii. 27); and that Ezra should then narrate his journey to and arrival at Jerusalem, and his energetic proceedings against the unlawful marriages, in his own words (chap. viii. and ix.). But it is said to be "striking," that in the account of this circumstance Ezra is, from ch. x. 1 onwards, again spoken of in the third person. This change of the person speaking is said to show that the second part of the book was not composed by Ezra himself, but that some other historian merely made use of a record by Ezra, giving it verbally in chap. viii. and ix., and in chap. vii. and x.

relating Ezra's return from Babylon, and the conclusion of the transaction concerning the unlawful marriages, in his own words, but with careful employment of the said record. This view, however, does not satisfactorily explain the transition from the first to the third person in the narrative. For what could have induced the historian, after giving Ezra's record verbally in chap. viii. and ix., to break off in the midst of Ezra's account of his proceedings against the unlawful marriages, and, instead of continuing the record, to relate the end of the transaction in his own words? Bertheau's solution of this question, that the author did this for the sake of brevity, is of no force; for chap. x. shows no trace of brevity, but, on the contrary, the progress and conclusion of the affair are related with the same circumstantiality and attention to details exhibited in its commencement in viii. and ix. To this must be added, that in other historical portions of the Old Testament, in which the view of different authorship is impossible, the narrator, as a person participating in the transaction, frequently makes the transition from the first to the third person, and *vice versa*. Compare, *e.g.*, Isa. vii. 1 sq. ("Then said the Lord *unto Isaiah*, Go forth," etc.) with viii. 1 ("Moreover, the Lord said *unto me*, Take thee a great roll," etc.); Jer. xx. 1–6, where Jeremiah relates of himself in the third person, that he had been smitten by Pashur, and had prophesied against him, with ver. 7 sq., where, without further explanation, he thus continues: "O Lord, Thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded;" or Jer. xxviii. 1 ("Hananiah . . . spake unto me . . . the Lord said *to me*") with ver. 5 ("Then the prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah"), and also ver. 6; while in the verse (7) immediately following, Jeremiah writes, "Hear thou now this word which I speak in thine ears." As Jeremiah, when here narrating circumstances of his own ministry, suddenly passes from the third to the first person, and then immediately returns to the third; so, too, might Ezra, after speaking (vii. 1–10) of his return to Jerusalem in the third person, proceed with a subsequent more circumstantial description of his journey to and arrival

at Jerusalem, and narrate his acts and proceedings there in the first person (chap. viii. and ix.), and then, after giving his prayer concerning the iniquity of his people (chap. ix.), take up the objective form of speech in his account of what took place in consequence of this prayer; and instead of writing, "Now when I had prayed," etc., continue, "Now when Ezra had prayed," and maintain this objective form of statement to the end of chap. x. Thus a change of author cannot be proved by a transition in the narrative from the first to the third person. As little can this be inferred from the remark (vii. 6) that "Ezra was a ready scribe in the law of Moses," by which his vocation, and the import of his return to Jerusalem, are alluded to immediately after the statement of his genealogy.

The reasons, then, just discussed are not of such a nature as to cast any real doubt upon the single authorship of this book; and modern criticism has been unable to adduce any others. Neither is its independence impeached by the circumstance that it breaks off "unexpectedly" at chap. x., without relating Ezra's subsequent proceedings at Jerusalem, although at chap. vii. 10 it is said not only that "Ezra had prepared his heart . . . to teach in Israel statutes and judgments," but also that Artaxerxes in his edict (vii. 12–26) commissioned him to uphold the authority of the law of God as the rule of action; nor by the fact that in Neh. viii.–x. we find Ezra still a teacher of the law, and that these very chapters form the necessary complement of the notices concerning Ezra in the book of Ezra (Bertheau). For though the narrative in Neh. viii.–x. actually does complete the history of Ezra's ministry, it by no means follows that the book of Ezra is incomplete, and no independent work at all, but only a portion of a larger book, because it does not contain this narrative. For what justifies the assumption that "Ezra purposed to give an account of all that he effected at Jerusalem?" The whole book may be sought through in vain for a single peg on which to hang such a theory. To impute such an intention to Ezra, and to infer that, because his ministry is spoken of in the book of Nehemiah also, the

book of Ezra is but a fragment, we should need far more weighty arguments in proof of the single authorship of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah than the defenders of this hypothesis are able to bring forward. In respect of diction, nothing further has been adduced than that the expression כְּיַד אֱלֹהַי עָלַי, so frequently recurring in Ezra (Ezra vii. 28; compare vii. 6, 9, viii. 18, 22, 31), is also once found in Nehemiah (ii. 8). But the single occurrence of this one expression, common to himself and Ezra, in the midst of the very peculiar diction and style of Nehemiah, is not the slightest proof of the original combination of the two books; and Neh. ii. 8 simply shows that Nehemiah appropriated words which, in his intercourse with Ezra, he had heard from his lips.—With respect to other instances in which the diction and matter are common to the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, we have already shown, in the introduction to Chronicles, that they are too trifling to establish an identity of authorship in the case of these three books; and at the same time remarked that the agreement between the closing verses of Chronicles and the beginning of Ezra does but render it probable that Ezra may have been the author of the former book also.

§ 3. COMPOSITION AND HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE BOOK OF EZRA.

If this book is a single one, *i.e.* the work of one author, there can be no reasonable doubt that that author was Ezra, the priest and scribe, who in chap. vii.–x. narrates his return from Babylon to Jerusalem, and the circumstances of his ministry there, neither its language nor contents exhibiting any traces of a later date. Its historical character, too, was universally admitted until Schrader, in his beforenamed treatise, p. 399, undertook to dispute it with respect to the first part of this book. The proofs he adduced were, first, that the statement made by the author, who lived 200 years after the building of the temple, in this book, *i.e.* in the chronicle of the foundation of the temple in the second

year after the return from Babylon, concerning the cessation of the building till the second year of Darius, and its resumption in that year, is unhistorical, and rests only upon the insufficiently confirmed assumption that the exiles, penetrated as they were with ardent love for their hereditary religion, full of joy that their deliverance from Babylon was at last effected, and of heartfelt gratitude to God, should have suffered fifteen years to elapse before they set to work to raise the national sanctuary from its ruins; secondly, that the accounts both of the rearing of the altar, iii. 2 and 3, and of the proceedings at laying the foundations of the temple, together with the names, dates, and other seemingly special details found in chap. iii., iv. 1–5, 24, vi. 14, are not derived from ancient historical narratives, but are manifestly due to the imagination of the chronicler drawing upon the documents given in the book of Ezra, upon other books of the Old Testament, and upon his own combinations thereof. This whole argument, however, rests upon the assertion, that neither in Ezra v. 2 and 16, in Hagg. i. 2, 4, 8, 14, ii. 12, nor in Zech. i. 16, iv. 9, vi. 12, 13, viii. 9, is the resumption of the temple building in the second year of the reign of Darius spoken of, but that, on the contrary, the laying of its foundations in the said year of Darius is in some of these passages assumed, in others distinctly stated. Such a conclusion can, however, only be arrived at by a misconception of the passages in question. When it is said, Ezra v. 2, "Then (*i.e.* when the prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied) rose up Zerubbabel and Jeshua . . . and began to build the house of God" (שָׂרִיו לִמְבְנֹא), there is no need to insist that בָּנָא often signifies to rebuild, but the word may be understood strictly of beginning to build. And this accords with the fact, that while in chap. iii. and iv. nothing is related concerning the building of the temple, whose foundations were laid in the second year of the return, it is said that immediately after the foundations were laid the Samaritans came and desired to take part in the building of the temple, and that when their request was refused, they weakened the hands of the people, and deterred them from

building (iv. 1–5). Schrader can only establish a discrepancy between v. 2 and chap. iii. and iv. by confounding building with foundation-laying, two terms which neither in Hebrew nor German have the same signification. Still less can it be inferred from the statement of the Jewish elders (Ezra v. 16), when questioned by Tatnai and his companions as to who had commanded them to build the temple, "Then came the same Sheshbazzar and laid the foundation of the house of God, which is in Jerusalem, *and since that time even until now hath it been in building*," that the building of the temple proceeded *without intermission* from the laying of its foundations under Cyrus till the second year of Darius. For can we be justified in the supposition that the Jewish elders would furnish Tatnai with a detailed statement of matters for the purpose of informing him what had been done year by year, and, by thus enumerating the hindrances which had for an interval put a stop to the building, afford the Persian officials an excuse for consequently declaring the question of resuming the building non-suited? For Tatnai made no inquiry as to the length of time the temple had been in building, or whether this had been going on uninterruptedly, but only who had authorized them to build; and the Jewish elders replied that King Cyrus had commanded the building of the temple, and delivered to Sheshbazzar, whom he made governor, the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away to Babylon, whereupon Sheshbazzar had begun the work of building which had been going on from then till now. Moreover, Schrader himself seems to have felt that not much could be proved from Ezra v. 2 and 16. Hence he seeks to construct the chief support of his theory from the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. In this attempt, however, he shows so little comprehension of prophetic diction, that he expounds Haggai's reproofs of the indifference of the people in building the temple, Hagg. i. 2, 4, 8, as stating that as yet nothing had been done, not even the foundations laid; transforms the words, Hagg. i. 14, "they came and did work in the house of the Lord" (יַעֲשׂוּ מְלָאכָה בב׳), into "they began to build;"

makes Hagg. ii. 18, by a tautological view of the words לְמִן הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִסַּד, mean that the foundations of the temple were not laid till the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of the second year of Darius (see the true meaning of the passage in the commentary on Haggai); and finally, explains the prophecies of Zechariah (i. 16, iv. 9, vi. 12, viii. 9) concerning the rearing of a spiritual temple by Messiah as applying to the temple of wood and stone actually erected by Zerubbabel. By such means he arrives at the result that "neither does the Chaldee section of Ezra (chap. v.), including the official documents, say anything of a foundation of the temple in the second year after the return from Babylon; nor do the contemporary prophets Haggai and Zechariah make any mention of this earlier foundation in their writings, but, on the contrary, place the foundation in the second year of Darius: that, consequently, the view advocated by the author of the book of Ezra, that the building of the temple began in the days of Cyrus, and immediately after the return of the exiles, is wholly without documentary proof." This result he seeks further to establish by collecting all the words, expressions, and matters (such as sacrifices, Levites, priests, etc.) in Ezra iii. and iv. and vi. 16–22, to which parallels may be found in the books of Chronicles, for the sake of drawing from them the further conclusion that "the chronicler," though he did not indeed invent the facts related in Ezra iii. 1–4, v., and vi. 16–22, combined them from the remaining chapters of the book of Ezra, and from other books of the Old Testament,—a conclusion in which the chief stress is placed upon the supposed fact that the chronicler was sufficiently known to have been a compiler and maker up of history. Such handling of Scripture can, however, in our days no longer assume the guise of "scientific criticism;" this kind of critical produce, by which De Wette and his follower Gramberg endeavoured to gain notoriety sixty years ago, having long been condemned by theological science. Nor can the historical character of this book be shaken by such frivolous objections. Three events of fundamental importance to the restoration and continuance of Israel as a separate

people among the other nations of the earth are contained in it, viz.: (1) The release of the Jews and Israelites from the Babylonian captivity by Cyrus; (2) The re-settlement in Judah and Jerusalem, with the rebuilding of the temple; (3) The ordering of the re-settled flock according to the law of Moses, by Ezra. The actual occurrence of these three events is raised above all doubt by the subsequent historical development of the Jews in their own land; and the narrative of the manner in which this development was rendered possible and brought to pass, possesses as complete documentary authentication, in virtue of the communication of the official acts of the Persian kings Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes,—acts of which the whole contents are given after the manner, so to speak, of State papers,—as any fact of ancient history. The historical narrative, in fact, does but furnish a brief explanation of the documents and edicts which are thus handed down.

For the exegetical literature, see *Lehrb. der Einleitung*, p. 455; to which must be added, E. Bertheau, *die Bücher Esra, Nehemia, und Ester erkl.*, Lpz. (being the seventeenth number of the *kurzgef. exeget. Handbuchs zum A. T.*).

EXPOSITION.

I.—THE RETURN OF THE JEWS FROM BABYLON UNDER CYRUS. RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE AND OF THE WORSHIP OF GOD AT JERUSALEM.—CHAP. I.-VI.

WHEN the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity had elapsed, King Cyrus, by an edict published in the first year of his rule over Babylon, gave permission to all the Jews in his whole realm to return to their native land, and called upon them to rebuild the temple of God at Jerusalem. The execution of this royal and gracious decree by the Jews forms the subject of the first part of this book,—chap. i. and ii. treating of the return of a considerable number of families of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, under the conduct of Zerubbabel the prince and Joshua the high priest, to Jerusalem and Judæa; the remaining chapters, iii.-vi., of the restoration of the worship of God, and of the rebuilding of the temple.

CHAP. I.—THE EDICT OF CYRUS, THE DEPARTURE FROM BABYLON, THE RESTITUTION OF THE SACRED VESSELS.

In the first year of his rule over Babylon, Cyrus king of Persia proclaimed throughout his whole kingdom, both by voice and writing, that the God of heaven had commanded him to build His temple at Jerusalem, and called upon the Jews living in exile to return to Jerusalem, and to build there the house of the God of Israel. At the same time, he exhorted all his subjects to facilitate by gifts the journey of

the Jews dwelling in their midst, and to assist by free-will offerings the building of the temple (1–4). In consequence of this royal decree, those Jews whose spirit God had raised up prepared for their return, and received from their neighbours gifts and free-will offerings (5 and 6). Cyrus, moreover, delivered to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah, the vessels of the temple which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Vers. 1–4. *The edict of Cyrus.*—Ver. 1. The opening word, "*And* in the first year," etc., is to be explained by the circumstance that what is here recorded forms also, in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22 and 23, the conclusion of the history of the kingdom of Judah at its destruction by the Chaldeans, and is transferred thence to the beginning of the history of the restoration of the Jews by Cyrus. כּוֹרֶשׁ is the Hebraized form of the ancient Persian Kurus, as *Κῦρος*, Cyrus, is called upon the monuments, and is perhaps connected with the Indian title Kuru; see Delitzsch on Isa. xliv. 28. The first year of Cyrus is the first year of his rule over Babylon and the Babylonian empire.[1] פָּרַס—in the better editions, such as that of Norzi and J. H. Mich., with Pathach under ר, and only pointed פָּרָס with a graver pause, as with Silluk, iv. 3, in the cuneiform inscriptions Pâraça—signifies in biblical phraseology the Persian empire; comp. Dan. v. 28, vi. 9, etc. לִכְלוֹת, that the word of Jahve might come to an end. כָּלָה, to be completed, 2 Chron. xxix. 34. The word of the Lord is completed when its fulfilment takes place; hence in the Vulg. *ut compleretur, i.e.* לְמַלֹּאוֹת, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. Here, however, כְּלוֹת is more appropriate, because the notion of the lapse or termination of the seventy years predominates. The statement of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. xxv. 11, etc., xxix. 10; comp. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21) concerning the desolation and servitude of Judah is here intended. These seventy years commenced with the first taking of Jerusalem by

[1] *Duplex fuit initium, Cyri Persarum regis; prius Persicum, idque antiquius, posterius Babylonicum, de quo Hesdras; quia dum Cyrus in Perside tantum regnaret, regnum ejus ad Judæos, qui in Babylonia erant, nihil adtinuit.—Cleric. ad Esr.* i. 1.

Nebuchadnezzar, when Daniel and other youths of the seed-royal were carried to Babylon (Dan. i. 1, 2) in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim; see the explanation of Dan. i. 1. This year was the year 606 B.C.; hence the seventy years terminate in 536 B.C., the first year of the sole rule of Cyrus over the Babylonian empire. Then "Jahve stirred up the spirit of Coresh," *i.e.* moved him, made him willing; comp. with this expression, 1 Chron. v. 26 and Hagg. i. 14. וַיַּעֲבֵר־קוֹל, "he caused a voice to go forth," *i.e.* he proclaimed by heralds; comp. Ex. xxxvi. 6, 2 Chron. xxx. 5, etc. With this is zeugmatically combined the subsequent וְגַם בְּמִכְתָּב, so that the general notion of proclaiming has to be taken from יעבר קול, and supplied before these words. The sense is: he proclaimed throughout his whole realm by heralds, and also by written edicts.

Ver. 2. The proclamation—"Jahve the God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah"—corresponds with the edicts of the great kings of Persia preserved in the cuneiform inscriptions, inasmuch as these, too, usually begin with the acknowledgment that they owe their power to the god Ahuramazdâ (Ormuzd), the creator of heaven and earth.[1] In this edict, however, Cyrus expressly calls the God of heaven by His Israelitish name Jahve, and speaks of a commission from this God to build Him a temple at Jerusalem. Hence it is manifest that Cyrus consciously entered into the purposes of Jahve, and sought, as far as he was concerned, to fulfil them. Bertheau thinks, on the contrary, that it is impossible to dismiss the conjecture that our historian, guided by an uncertain tradition, and induced by his own historical prepossessions,

[1] Comp. *e.g.* the inscription of Elvend in three languages, explained in Joach. Ménant, *Exposé des éléments de la grammaire assyrienne*, Paris 1868, p. 302, whose Aryan text begins thus: *Deus magnus Auramàzdâ, qui maximus deorum, qui hanc terram creavit, qui hoc cœlum creavit, qui homines creavit, qui potentiam* (?) *dedit hominibus, qui Xerxem regem fecit*, etc. An inscription of Xerxes begins in a similar manner, according to Lassen, in *Die altpersischen Keilinschriften*, Bonn 1836, p. 172.

remodelled the edict of Cyrus. There is, however, no sufficient foundation for such a conjecture. If the first part of the book of Ezra is founded upon contemporary records of the events, this forbids an *à priori* assertion that the matter of the proclamation of Cyrus rests upon an uncertain tradition, and, on the contrary, presupposes that the historian had accurate knowledge of its contents. Hence, even if the thoroughly Israelitish stamp presented by these verses can afford no support to the view that they faithfully report the contents of the royal edict, it certainly offers as little proof for the opinion that the Israelite historian remodelled the edict of Cyrus after an uncertain tradition, and from historical prepossessions. Even Bertheau finds the fact that Cyrus should have publicly made known by a written edict the permission given to the Jews to depart, probable in itself, and corroborated by the reference to such an edict in chap. v. 17 and vi. 3. This edict of Cyrus, which was deposited in the house of the rolls in the fortress of Achmetha, and still existed there in the reign of Darius Hystaspis, contained, however, not merely the permission for the return of the Jews to their native land, but, according to vi. 3, the command of Cyrus to build the house of God at Jerusalem; and Bertheau himself remarks on chap. vi. 3, etc.: "There is no reason to doubt the correctness of the statement that Cyrus, at the time he gave permission for the re-settlement of the community, also commanded the expenses of rebuilding the temple to be defrayed from the public treasury." To say this, however, is to admit the historical accuracy of the actual contents of the edict, since it is hence manifest that Cyrus, of his own free will, not only granted to the Jews permission to return to the land of their fathers, but also commanded the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem. Although, then, this edict was composed, not in Hebrew, but in the current language of the realm, and is reproduced in this book only in a Hebrew translation, and although the occurrence of the name Jahve therein is not corroborated by chap. vi. 3, yet these two circumstances by no means justify Bertheau's conclusion, that "if Cyrus in this edict called

the universal dominion of which he boasted a gift of the god whom he worshipped as the creator of heaven and earth, the Israelite translator, who could not designate this god by his Persian name, and who was persuaded that the God of Israel had given the kingdom to Cyrus, must have bestowed upon the supreme God, whom Cyrus mocked, the name of Jahve, the God of heaven. When, then, it might further have been said in the document, that Cyrus had resolved, not without the consent of the supreme God, to provide for the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem,—and such a reference to the supreme God might well occur in the announcement of a royal resolution in a decree of Cyrus,—the Israelite translator could not again but conclude that Cyrus referred to Jahve, and that Jahve had commanded him to provide for the building of the temple." For if Cyrus found himself impelled to the resolution of building a temple to the God of heaven in Jerusalem, *i.e.* of causing the temple destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar to be rebuilt, he must have been acquainted with this God, have conceived a high respect for Him, and have honoured Him as the God of heaven. It was not possible that he should arrive at such a resolution by faith in Ahuramazdâ, but only by means of facts which had inspired him with reverence for the God of Israel. It is this consideration which bestows upon the statement of Josephus, *Antt.* xi. 1. 1,—that Cyrus was, by means of the predictions of Isaiah, chap. xli. 25 sq., xliv. 28, xlv. 1 sq., who had prophesied of him by name 200 years before, brought to the conviction that the God of the Jews was the Most High God, and was on this account impelled to this resolution,—so high a degree of probability that we cannot but esteem its essence as historical. For when we consider the position held by Daniel at the court of Darius the Mede, the father-in-law of Cyrus,—that he was there elevated to the rank of one of the three presidents set over the 120 satraps of the realm, placed in the closest relation with the king, and highly esteemed by him (Dan. vi.),—we are perfectly justified in adopting the opinion that Cyrus had been made acquainted with the God of the Jews, and with the prophecies of Isaiah

concerning Coresh, by Daniel.[1] Granting, then, that the edict of Cyrus may have been composed in the current language of the realm, and not rendered word for word in Hebrew by the biblical author of the present narrative, its essential contents are nevertheless faithfully reproduced; and there are not sufficient grounds even for the view that the God who had inspired Cyrus with this resolution was in the royal edict designated only as the God of heaven, and not expressly called Jahve. Why may not Cyrus have designated the God of heaven, to whom as the God of the Jews he had resolved to build a temple in Jerusalem, also by His name Jahve? According to polytheistic notions, the worship of this God might be combined with the worship of Ahuramazdâ as the supreme God of the Persians. — On פָּקַד עָלַי וגו׳, J. H. Mich. well remarks: *Mandavit mihi, nimirum dudum ante per Jesajam* xliv. 24–28, xlv. 1–13, *forte etiam per Danielem, qui annum hunc Cyri primum vivendo attigit* (Dan. i. 21, vi. 29) *et Susis in Perside vixit* chap. viii. 2 (in saying which, he only infers too much from the last passage; see on Dan. viii. 2).

Ver. 3. In conformity with the command of God, Cyrus not only invites the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and to rebuild the temple, but also requires all his subjects to assist the returning Jews, and to give free-will offerings for the

[1] Hence not only ancient expositors, but also in very recent times Pressel (*Herzog's Realencycl.* iii. p. 232), and A. Koehler, *Haggai*, p. 9, etc., defend the statement of Josephus, *l.c.*, ταῦτ' (viz. the previously quoted prophecy, Isa. xliv. 28) οὖν ἀναγνόντα καὶ θαυμάσαντα τὸ θεῖον ὁρμή τις ἔλαβε καὶ φιλοτιμία ποιῆσαι τὰ γεγραμμένα, as historically authentic. Pressel remarks, "that Holy Scripture shows what it was that made so favourable an impression upon Cyrus, by relating the *rôle* played by Daniel at the overthrow of the Babylonian monarchy, Dan. v. 28, 30. What wonder was it that the fulfiller of this prediction should have felt himself attracted towards the prophet who uttered it, and should willingly restore the vessels which Belshazzar had that night committed the sin of polluting?" etc. The remark of Bertheau, on the contrary, "that history knows of no Cyrus who consciously and voluntarily honours Jahve the God of Israel, and consciously and voluntarily receives and executes the commands of this God," is one of the arbitrary *dicta* of neological criticism.

temple. מִי בָכֶם, who among you of all his people, refers to all those subjects of his realm to whom the decree was to be made known; and all the people of Jahve is the whole nation of Israel, and not Judah only, although, according to ver. 5, it was mainly those only who belonged to Judah that availed themselves of this royal permission. יְהִי אֱלֹהָיו עִמּוֹ, his God be with him, is a wish for a blessing: comp. Josh. i. 17; 1 Esdras ii. 5, ἔστω; while in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23 we find, on the other hand, יהוה for יהי. This wish is followed by the summons to go up to Jerusalem and to build the temple, the reason for which is then expressed by the sentence, "He is the God which is in Jerusalem."

Ver. 4. וְכָל־הַנִּשְׁאָר וגו׳ are all belonging to the people of God in the provinces of Babylon, all the captives still living: comp. Neh. i. 2 sq.; Hagg. ii. 3. These words stand first in an absolute sense, and מִכָּל־הַמְּקֹמוֹת וגו׳ belongs to what follows: In all places where he (*i.e.* each man) sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with gold, etc. The men of his place are the non-Israelite inhabitants of the place. נָשָׂא, to assist, like 1 Kings ix. 1. רְכוּשׁ specified, besides gold, silver, and cattle, means moveable, various kinds. עִם־הַנְּדָבָה, with, besides the free-will offering, *i.e.* as well as the same, and is therefore supplied in ver. 6 by לְבַד עַל. Free-will offerings for the temple might also be gold, silver, and vessels: comp. viii. 28; Ex. xxxv. 21.

Vers. 5 and 6. In consequence of this royal summons, the heads of the houses of Judah and Benjamin, of the priests and Levites,—in short, all whose spirit God stirred up,—rose to go up to build the house of God. The ל in לְכָל serves to comprise the remaining persons, and may therefore be rendered by, in short, or namely; comp. Ewald, § 310, *a*. The relative sentence then depends upon כֹּל without אֲשֶׁר. The thought is: All the Jews were called upon to return, but those only obeyed the call whom God made willing to build the temple at Jerusalem, *i.e.* whom the religious craving of their hearts impelled thereto. For, as Josephus says, *Antt.* xi. 1: πολλοὶ κατέμειναν ἐν τῇ Βαβυλῶνι, τὰ κτήματα καταλιπεῖν οὐ θέλοντες.—Ver. 6. All their surrounders assisted them with

gifts. The surrounders are the people of the places where Jews were making preparations for returning; chiefly, therefore, their heathen neighbours (ver. 4), but also those Jews who remained in Babylon. חִזְּקוּ בִיְדֵיהֶם is not identical in meaning with חָזַק יָד, to strengthen, *e.g.* Jer. xxiii. 14, Neh. ii. 18; but with הֶחֱזִיק בְּיָד, the Piel here standing instead of the elsewhere usual Hiphil: to grasp by the hand, *i.e.* to assist; comp. Lev. xxv. 34. לְבַד עַל, separated to, besides; elsewhere joined with מִן, Ex. xii. 37, etc. הִתְנַדֵּב connected with כֹּל without אֲשֶׁר, as the *verbum fin.* in ver. 5, 1 Chron. xxix. 3, and elsewhere. לְבֵית הָאֱלֹהִים must, according to ver. 4, be supplied mentally; comp. ii. 68, iii. 5, 1 Chron. xxix. 9, 17.

Vers. 7–10. King Cyrus, moreover, caused those sacred vessels of the temple which had been carried away by Nebuchadnezzar to be brought forth, and delivered them by the hand of his treasurer to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah, for the use of the house of God which was about to be built. הוֹצִיא, to fetch out from the royal treasury. The "vessels of the house of Jahve" are the gold and silver vessels of the temple which Nebuchadnezzar, at the first taking of Jerusalem in the reign of Jehoiakim, carried away to Babylon, and lodged in the treasure-house of his god (2 Chron. xxxvi. 7 and Dan. i. 2). For those which he took at its second conquest were broken up (2 Kings xxiv. 13); and the other gold and silver goods which, as well as the large brazen implements, were taken at the third conquest, and the destruction of the temple (2 Kings xxv. 14 sq.; Jer. lii. 18 sq.), would hardly have been preserved by the Chaldeans, but rather made use of as valuable booty. —Ver. 8. Cyrus delivered these vessels עַל יַד, into the hand of the treasurer, to whose care they were entrusted; *i.e.* placed them under his inspection, that they might be faithfully restored. מִתְרְדָת is Mithridates. גִּזְבָּר, answering to the Zend *gazabara*, means treasurer (see com. on Dan. p. 45, note 1). This officer counted them out to the prince of Judah Sheshbazzar, undoubtedly the Chaldee name of Zerubbabel. For, according to v. 14, 16, שֵׁשְׁבַּצַּר was the governor (פֶּחָה) placed

by Cyrus over the new community in Judah and Jerusalem, and who, according to ver. 11 of the present chapter, returned to Jerusalem at the head of those who departed from Babylon; while we are informed (chap. ii. 2, iii. 1, 8, and iv. 3, v. 2) that Zerubbabel was not only at the head of the returning Jews, but also presided as secular ruler over the settlement of the community in Judah and Jerusalem. The identity of Sheshbazzar with Zerubbabel, which has been objected to by Schrader and Nöldeke, is placed beyond a doubt by a comparison of v. 16 with iii. 8, etc., v. 2: for in v. 16 Sheshbazzar is named as he who laid the foundation of the new temple in Jerusalem; and this, according to v. 2 and iii. 8, was done by Zerubbabel. The view, too, that Zerubbabel, besides this his Hebrew name, had, as the official of the Persian king, also a Chaldee name, is in complete analogy with the case of Daniel and his three companions, who, on being taken into the service of the Babylonian king, received Chaldee names (Dan. i. 7). Zerubbabel, moreover, seems, even before his appointment of פֶּחָה to the Jewish community in Judah, to have held some office in either the Babylonian or Persian Court or State; for Cyrus would hardly have entrusted this office to any private individual among the Jews. The meaning of the word שֵׁשְׁבַּצַּר is not yet ascertained: in the LXX. it is written Σασαβασάρ, Σαβαχασάρ, and Σαναβάσσαρος; 1 Esdras has Σαμανασσάρ, or, according to better MSS., Σαναβασσάρ; and Josephus, *l.c.*, Ἀβασσάρ.—Vers. 9–11. The enumeration of the vessels: 1. אֲגַרְטָלִים of gold 30, and of silver 1000. The word occurs only here, and is translated in the Septuagint ψυκτῆρες; in 1 Esdr. ii. 11, σπονδεῖα. The Talmudic explanation of Aben Ezra, "vessels for collecting the blood of the sacrificed lambs," is derived from אגר, to collect, and טָלֶה, a lamb, but is certainly untenable. אֲגַרְטָל is probably connected with قُرْطَلَّة, the rabbinical קרטיל, the Syriac ܩܪܛܠܐ, the Greek κάρταλλος or κάρταλος, a basket (according to Suidas), κάρταλος having no etymology in Greek; but can hardly be derived, as by Meier, *hebr. Wurzelwörterbuch*, p. 683, from the Syriac

ܥܪܛܠ, *nudavit*, to make bare, the Arabic عرطل, to make empty, to hollow, with the sense of hollow basins. 2. מַחֲלָפִים 29. This word also occurs only here. The Sept. has *παρηλλαγμένα* (interpreting etymologically after חָלַף), 1 Esdr. *θυΐσκαι*, the Vulg. *cultri*, sacrificial knives, according to the rabbinical interpretation, which is based upon חלף, in the sense of to pierce, to cut through (Judg. v. 26; Job xx. 24). This meaning is, however, certainly incorrect, being based linguistically upon a mere conjecture, and not even offering an appropriate sense, since we do not expect to find knives between vessels and dishes. Ewald (*Gesch.* iv. p. 88), from the analogy of מַחֲלָפוֹת (Judg. xvi. 13, 19), plaits, supposes vessels ornamented with plaited or net work; and Bertheau, vessels bored after the manner of a grating for censing, closed fire-pans with holes and slits. All is, however, uncertain. 3. כְּפוֹרִים, goblets (goblets with covers; comp. 1 Chron. xv. 18) of gold, 30; and of silver, 410. The word מִשְׁנִים is obscure; connected with כְּפוֹרֵי כֶסֶף it can only mean goblets of a second order (comp. 1 Chron. xv. 18). Such an addition appears, however, superfluous; the notion of a second order or class being already involved in their being of silver, when compared with the golden goblets. Hence Bertheau supposes משנים to be a numeral corrupted by a false reading; and the more so, because the sum-total given in ver. 11 seems to require a larger number than 410. These reasons, however, are not insuperable. The notion of a second order of vessels need not lie in their being composed of a less valuable metal, but may also be used to define the sort of implement; and the difference between the separate numbers and the sum-total is not perfectly reconciled by altering משנים into אלפים, 2000. 4. 1000 other vessels or implements.

Ver. 11. "All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred." But only 30 + 1000 אגרטלים, 29 מחלפים, 30 + 410 covered goblets, and 1000 other vessels are enumerated, making together 2499. The same numbers are found in the LXX. Ancient interpreters reconciled

the difference by the supposition that in the separate statements only the larger and more valuable vessels are specified, while in the sum-total the greater and lesser are reckoned together. This reconciliation of the discrepancy is, however, evidently arbitrary, and cannot be justified by a reference to 2 Chron. xxxvi. 18, where the taking away of the greater and lesser vessels of the temple at the destruction of Jerusalem is spoken of. In ver. 11 it is indisputably intended to give the sum-total according to the enumeration of the separate numbers. The difference between the two statements has certainly arisen from errors in the numbers, for the correction of which the means are indeed wanting. The error may be supposed to exist in the sum-total, where, instead of 5400, perhaps 2500 should be read, which sum may have been named in round numbers instead of 2499.[1] עִם הֵעָלוֹת הַגּוֹלָה, at the bringing up of the carried away, *i.e.* when they were brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem. The infinitive Niphal הֵעָלוֹת, with a passive signification, occurs also Jer. xxxvii. 11.

[1] Ewald (*Gesch.* iv. p. 88) and Bertheau think they find in 1 Esdr. ii. 12, 13, a basis for ascertaining the correct number. In this passage 1000 golden and 1000 silver σπονδεῖα, 29 silver θυΐσκαι, 30 golden and 2410 silver φιάλαι, and 1000 other vessels, are enumerated (1000 + 1000 + 29 + 30 + 2410 + 1000 = 5469); while the total is said to be 5469 But 1000 golden σπονδεῖα bear no proportion to 1000 silver, still less do 30 golden φιάλαι to 2410 silver. Hence Bertheau is of opinion that the more definite statement 30, of the Hebrew text, is to be regarded as original, instead of the first 1000; that, on the other hand, instead of the 30 golden כַּפּוֹרִים, 1000 originally stood in the text, making the total 5469. Ewald thinks that we must read 1030 instead of 1000 golden אגרטלים (σπονδεῖα), and make the total 5499. In opposition to these conjectures, we prefer abiding by the Hebrew text; for the numbers of 1 Esdras are evidently the result of an artificial, yet unskilful reconciliation of the discrepancy. It cannot be inferred, from the fact that Ezra subsequently, at his return to Jerusalem, brought with him 20 golden כַּפּוֹרִים, that the number of 30 such כַּפּוֹרִים given in this passage is too small.

CHAP. II.—LIST OF THOSE WHO RETURNED FROM BABYLON WITH ZERUBBABEL AND JOSHUA.

The title (vers. 1 and 2) announces that the list which follows it (vers. 3–67) contains the number of the men of the people of Israel who returned to Jerusalem and Judah from the captivity in Babylon, under the conduct of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and other leaders. It is composed of separate lists: of the families of the people, 3–35; of the priests and Levites, 36–42; of the Nethinims and servants of Solomon, 43–58; of families who could not prove their Israelite descent, and of certain priests whose genealogy could not be found, 59–63; and it closes with the sum-total of the persons, and of their beasts of burden, 64–67. This is followed by an enumeration of the gifts which they brought with them for the temple (vers. 68 and 69), and by a final statement with regard to the entire list (ver. 70). Nehemiah also, when he desired to give a list of the members of the community at Jerusalem, met with the same document, and incorporated it in the book which bears his name (chap. vii. 6–73). It is also contained in 1 Esdr. v. 7–45. The three texts, however, exhibit in the names, and still more so in the numbers, such variations as involuntarily arise in transcribing long lists of names and figures. The sum-total of 42,360 men and 7337 servants and maids is alike in all three texts; but the addition of the separate numbers in the Hebrew text of Ezra gives only 29,818, those in Nehemiah 31,089, and those in the Greek Esdras 30,143 men. In our elucidation of the list, we shall chiefly have respect to the differences between the texts of Ezra and Nehemiah, and only notice the variations in 1 Esdras so far as they may appear to conduce to a better understanding of the matter of our text.

Vers. 1 and 2. *The title.*—"These are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of the carrying away (*i.e.* of those which had been carried away), whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, every

one to his city." In Neh. vii. 6 לְבָבֶל is omitted, through an error of transcription caused by the preceding בָּבֶל; and וְלִיהוּדָה stands instead of וַיְהוּדָה, which does not, however, affect the sense. הַמְּדִינָה is the province whose capital was Jerusalem (Neh. xi. 3), *i.e.* the province of Judæa as a district of the Persian empire; so v. 8, Neh. i. 2. The *Chethiv* נבוכדנצור is similar to the form Nebucadrezor, Jer. xlix. 28, and is nearer to the Babylonian form of this name than the usual biblical forms *Nebucadnezzar* or *Nebucadrezzar*. For further remarks on the various forms of this name, see on Dan. i. 1. They returned "each to his city," *i.e.* to the city in which he or his ancestors had dwelt before the captivity. Bertheau, on the contrary, thinks that, "though in the allotment of dwelling-places some respect would certainly be had to the former abode of tribes and families, yet the meaning cannot be that every one returned to the locality where his forefathers had dwelt; first, because it is certain (?) that all memorial of the connection of tribes and families was frequently obliterated, comp. below, v. 59–63; and then, because a small portion only of the former southern kingdom being assigned to the returned community, the descendants of dwellers in those towns which lay without the boundaries of the new state could not return to the cities of their ancestors." True, however, as this may be, the city of each man cannot mean that "which the authorities, in arranging the affairs of the community, assigned to individuals as their domicile, and of which they were reckoned inhabitants in the lists then drawn up for the sake of levying taxes," etc. (Bertheau). This would by no means be expressed by the words, "*they returned* each to his own city." We may, on the contrary, correctly say that the words hold good *à potiori*, *i.e.* they are used without regard to exceptions induced by the above-named circumstance. אֲשֶׁר־בָּאוּ, ver. 2, corresponds with the הָעֹלִים of ver. 1; hence in Neh. vii. 7 we find also the participle בָּאִים. They came with Zerubbabel, etc., that is, under their conduct and leadership. Zerubbabel (*Ζοροβάβελ*, זְרֻבָּבֶל or זְרֻבָּבֶל, probably abbreviated from זֶרַע בָּבֶל, *in Babylonia satus seu genitus*) the son of Shealtiel was a descendant of the captive king Jehoia-

chin (see on 1 Chron. iii. 17), and was probably on account of this descent made leader of the expedition, and royal governor of the new settlement, by Cyrus. Jeshua (יֵשׁוּעַ, the subsequently abbreviated form of the name Jehoshua or Joshua, which is used Neh. viii. 17 also for Joshua the son of Nun, the contemporary of Moses) the son of Josedech (Hagg. i. 1), and the grandson of Seraiah the high priest, who was put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, was the first high priest of the restored community; see on 1 Chron. v. 41. Besides those of Zerubbabel and Joshua, nine (or in Nehemiah more correctly ten) names, probably of heads of families, but of whom nothing further is known, are placed here. 1. Nehemiah, to be distinguished from the well-known Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah, Neh. i. 1; 2. Seraiah, instead of which we have in Neh. vii. 7 Azariah; 3. Reeliah, in Nehemiah Raamiah; 4. Nahamani in Nehemiah, *Ἐνημέος* in Esdras v. 8, omitted in the text of Ezra; 5. Mordecai, not the Mordecai of the book of Esther (ii. 5 sq.); 6. Bilshan; 7. Mispar, in Nehemiah Mispereth; 8. Bigvai; 9. Rehum, in 1 Esdras *Ροΐμος*; 10. Baanah. These ten, or reckoning Zerubbabel and Joshua, twelve men, are evidently intended, as leaders of the returning nation, to represent the new community as the successor of the twelve tribes of Israel. This is also unmistakeably shown by the designation, the people of Israel, in the special title, and by the offering of twelve sin-offerings, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, at the dedication of the new temple, vii. 16. The genealogical relation, however, of these twelve representatives to the twelve tribes cannot be ascertained, inasmuch as we are told nothing of the descent of the last ten. Of these ten names, one meets indeed with that of Seraiah, Neh. x. 3; of Bigvai, in the mention of the sons of Bigvai, ver. 14, and viii. 14; of Rehum, Neh. iii. 17, xii. 3; and of Baanah, Neh. x. 28; but there is nothing to make the identity of these persons probable. Even in case they were all of them descended from members of the former kingdom of Judah, this is no certain proof that they all belonged also to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, since even in the reign of Reho-

boam pious Israelites of the ten tribes emigrated thither, and both at and after the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, many Israelites might have taken refuge and settled in Judah. The last words, ver. 2, "The number of the men of the people of Israel," contain the special title of the first division of the following list, with which the titles in vers. 36, 40, 43, and 55 correspond. They are called the people of *Israel*, not the people of Judah, because those who returned represented the entire covenant people.

Vers. 3–35. *List of the houses and families of the people.* Comp. Neh. vii. 8–38.—To show the variations in names and numbers between the two texts, we here place them side by side, the names in Nehemiah being inserted in parentheses.

	Ezra II.	Ezra II.	Neh. VII.
1.	The sons of Parosh,	2172	2172
2.	,, ,, Shephatiah,	372	372
3.	,, ,, Arah,	775	652
4.	,, ,, Pahath Moab, of the sons of Joshua and Joab,	2812	2818
5.	,, ,, Elam,	1254	1254
6.	,, ,, Zattu,	945	845
7.	,, ,, Zaccai,	760	760
8.	,, ,, Bani (Binnui),	642	648
9.	,, ,, Bebai,	623	628
10.	,, ,, Azgad,	1222	2322
11.	,, ,, Adonikam,	666	667
12.	,, ,, Bigvai,	2056	2067
13.	,, ,, Adin,	454	655
14.	,, ,, Ater of Hezekiah,	98	98
15.	,, ,, Bezai,	323	324
16.	,, ,, Jorah (Harif),	112	112
17.	,, ,, Hashum,	223	328
18.	,, ,, Gibbar (Gibeon),	95	95
19.	,, ,, Bethlehem,	123	188
20.	The men of Netophah,	56	
21.	,, ,, Anathoth,	128	128
22.	The sons of Azmaveth (men of Beth-Azmaveth),	42	42
23.	,, ,, Kirjath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth,	743	743
24.	,, ,, Ramah and Gaba,	621	621
25.	The men of Michmas,	122	122

	Ezra ii.	Ezra ii.	Neh. vii.
26.	The men of Bethel and Ai,	223	123
27.	The sons of Nebo (Acher),	52	52
28.	,, ,, Magbish,	156	wanting.
29.	,, ,, the other Elam,	1254	1254
30.	,, ,, Harim,	320	320
31.	,, ,, Lod, Hadid, and Ono,	725	721
32.	,, ,, Jericho,	345	345
33.	,, ,, Senaah,	3630	3930
	Total,	24,144	25,406

The differences in the names are unimportant. In ver. 6 the ו copulative inserted between the names יֵשׁוּעַ and יוֹאָב, both in Nehemiah and 1 Esdras, is wanting; the name בָּנִי (ver. 10) is written בִּנּוּי in Nehemiah (ver. 15); for יוֹרָה (ver. 18), Neh. vii. 24 has חָרִיף, evidently another name for the same person, Jorah having a similarity of sound with יוֹרֶה, harvest-rain, and חָרִיף with חֹרֶף, harvest; for גִּבָּר (ver. 20), Neh. vii. 25 more correctly reads גִּבְעוֹן, the name of the town; and for קִרְיַת עָרִים (ver. 25), Neh. vii. 29 has the more correct form קִרְיַת יְעָרִים: the sons of Azmaveth (ver. 24) stands in Nehemiah as the men of Beth-Azmaveth; while, on the other hand, for the sons of Nebo (ver. 29), we have in Nehemiah (ver. 33) the men of Nebo Acher, where אַחֵר seems to have been inserted inadvertently, Elam Acher so soon following.[1] The names Bezai, Jorah, and Hashum (vers. 17–19) are transposed in Nehemiah (vers. 22–24) thus, Hashum, Bezai, and Harif; as are also Lod, etc., and Jericho, (vers. 33, 34) into Jericho and Lod, etc. (Nehemiah, vers. 36, 37). Lastly, the sons of Magbish (ver. 30) are omitted in Nehemiah; and the sons of Bethlehem and the men of Netophah (vers. 21 and 22) are in Nehemiah (ver. 26) reckoned together, and stated to be 188 instead of 123 + 56 = 179. A glance at the names undoubtedly shows that those numbered 1–17 are names of races or houses: those from 18–27, and from 31–33, are as certainly names of

[1] This view is more probable than the notion of Dietrich, in A. Merx, *Archiv für wissensch. Forschung des A. T.*, No. 3, p. 345, that by the addition אחר in Nehemiah, the Nebo in Judah is distinguished from the Nebo in Reuben.

towns; here, therefore, inhabitants of towns are named. This series is, however, interrupted by Nos. 28–30; Harim being undoubtedly, and Magbish very probably, names not of places, but of persons; while the equality of the number of the other, Elam 1254, with that of Elam (No. 6), seems somewhat strange. To this must be added, that Magbish is wanting both in Nehemiah and 2 Esdras, and the other Elam in 1 Esdras; while, in place of the sons of Harim 320, we have in 1 Esdr. v. 16, in a more appropriate position, υἱοὶ Ἀρομ 32. Hence Bertheau infers that Nos. 28 and 29, sons of Magbish and sons of Elam Acher (vers. 30 and 31), are spurious, and that Harim should be written Ἀρώμ, and inserted higher up. The reasons for considering these three statements doubtful have certainly some weight; but considering the great untrustworthiness of the statements in the first book of Esdras, and the other differences in the three lists arising, as they evidently do, merely from clerical errors, we could not venture to call them decisive.

Of the names of houses or races (Nos. 1–17 and 30), we meet with many in other lists of the time of Ezra and Nehemiah;[1] whence we perceive, (1) that of many houses only a portion returned with Zerubbabel and Joshua, the remaining portion following with Ezra; (2) that heads of houses are entered not by their personal names, but by that of the house. The names, for the most part, descend undoubtedly from the time anterior to the captivity, although we do not meet with them in the historical books of that epoch, because those books give only the genealogies of those more important

[1] In the list of those who went up with Ezra (chap. viii.), the sons of Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Adin, Elam, Shephatiah, Joab, Bebai, Azgad, Adonikam, Bigvai, and, according to the original text (Ezra viii. 8, 10), also the sons of Zattu and Bani. In the lists of those who had taken strange wives (chap. x.) we meet with individuals of the sons of Parosh, Elam, Zattu, Bebai, Bani, Pahath-Moab, Harim, Hashum, and of the sons of Nebo. Finally, in the lists of the heads of the people in the time of Nehemiah (Neh. x. 15 sq.) appear the names of Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, Azgad, Bebai, Bigvai, Adin, Ater, Hashum, Bezai, Harif, Harim, Anathoth, together with others which do not occur in the list we are now treating of.

personages who make a figure in history. Besides this, the genealogies in Chronicles are very incomplete, enumerating for the most part only the families of the more ancient times. Most, if not all, of these races or houses must be regarded as former inhabitants of Jerusalem. Nor can the circumstance that the names given in the present list are not found in the lists of the inhabitants of Jerusalem (1 Chron. ix. and Neh. xi.) be held as any valid objection; for in those lists only the heads of the great races of Judah and Benjamin are named, and not the houses which those races comprised. The names of cities, on the other hand (Nos. 18–33), are for the most part found in the older books of the Old Testament: Gibeon in Josh. ix. 3; Bethlehem in Ruth i. 2, Mic. v. 1; Netophah, 2 Sam. xxiii. 28 — see comm. on 1 Chron. ii. 54; Anathoth in Josh. xxi. 18, Jer. i. 1; Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, as cities of the Gibeonites, in Josh. ix. 17; Ramah and Geba, which often occur in the histories of Samuel and Saul, also in Josh. xviii. 24, 25; Michmash in 1 Sam. xiii. 2, 5, Isa. x. 28; Bethel and Ai in Josh. vii. 2; and Jericho in Josh. v. 13, and elsewhere. All these places were situate in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and were probably taken possession of by former inhabitants or their children immediately after the return. Azmaveth or Beth-Azmaveth (Neh. vii. 28) does not occur in the earlier history, nor is it mentioned out of this list, except in Neh. xii. 29, according to which it must be sought for in the neighbourhood of Geba. It has not, however, been as yet discovered; for the conjecture of Ritter, *Erdk.* xvi. p. 519, that it may be el-Hizme, near Anâta, is unfounded. Nor can the position of Nebo be certainly determined, the mountain of that name (Num. xxxii. 3) being out of the question. Nob or Nobe (1 Sam. xxi. 2) has been thought to be this town. Its situation is suitable; and this view is supported by the fact that in Neh. xi. 31 sq., Nob, and not Nebo, is mentioned, together with many of the places here named; in Ezra x. 43, however, the sons of Nebo are again specified. As far as situation is concerned, Nuba, or Beit-Nuba (Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, p. 189),

may, as Bertheau thinks, correspond with this town. Magbish was by many older expositors regarded as the name of a place, but is certainly that of a person; and no place of such a name is known. The localities Lod, Hadid, and Ono (ver. 33) first occur in the later books of the Old Testament. On Lod and Ono, see comm. on 1 Chron. viii. 12. חָדִיד is certainly *Ἀδιδά* (1 Macc. xii. 38, xiii. 13), not far from Lydda, where there is still a place called el-Hadithe, الحديثة (Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, p. 186).

סְנָאָה, ver. 35, is identified by older expositors with *Σεννά*, *νῦν Μαγδαλσεννά*, which Jerome describes as *terminus Judæ*, *in septimo lapide Jerichus contra septentrionalem plagam* (*Onom. ed. Lars. et Parth.* p. 332 sq.); in opposition to which, Robinson, in his above-cited work, identifies Magdal-Senna with a place called Mejdel, situate on the summit of a high hill about eighteen miles north of Jericho. The situation, however, of this town does not agree with the distance mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome, and the name Mejdel, *i.e.* tower, is not of itself sufficient to identify it with Magdal-Senna. The situation of the Senaah in question is not as yet determined; it must be sought for, however, at no great distance from Jericho. Of the towns mentioned in the present list, we find that the men of Jericho, Senaah, and Gibeon, as well as the inhabitants of Tekoa, Zanoah, Beth-haccerem, Mizpah, Beth-zur, and Keilah, assisted at the building of the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah (Neh. iii. 2, 3, 7). A larger number of towns of Judah and Benjamin is specified in the list in Neh. xi. 25–35, whence we perceive that in process of time a greater multitude of Jews returned from captivity and settled in the land of their fathers.

Vers. 36–39. The list of the priests is identical, both in names and numbers, with that of Neh. vii. 39–42. These are:

The sons of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua,	.	973
,, ,, Immer, ...		1052
,, ,, Pashur, ...		1247
,, ,, Harim, ...		1017
	Total,	4289

Jedaiah is the head of the second order of priests in 1 Chron. xxiv. 7. If, then, Jedaiah here represents this order, the words "of the house of Jeshua" must not be applied to Jeshua the high priest; the second order belonging in all probability to the line of Ithamar, and the high-priestly race, on the contrary, to that of Eleazar. We also meet the name Jeshua in other priestly families, *e.g.* as the name of the ninth order of priests in 1 Chron. xxiv. 11, so that it may be the old name of another priestly house. Since, however, it is unlikely that no priest of the order from which the high priest descended should return, the view that by Joshua the high priest is intended, and that the sons of Jedaiah were a portion of the house to which Joshua the high priest belonged, is the more probable one. In this case Jedaiah is not the name of the second order of priests, but of the head of a family of the high-priestly race. Immer is the name of the sixteenth order of priests, 1 Chron. xxiv. 14. Pashur does not occur among the orders of priests in 1 Chron. xxiv.; but we find the name, 1 Chron. ix. 12, and Neh. xi. 12, among the ancestors of Adaiah, a priest of the order of Malchijah; the Pashur of Jer. xx. and xxi. being, on the contrary, called the son of Immer, *i.e.* a member of the order of Immer. Hence Bertheau considers Pashur to have been the name of a priestly race, which first became extensive, and took the place of an older and perhaps extinct order, after the time of David. Gershom of the sons of Phinehas, and Daniel of the sons of Ithamar, are said, viii. 2, to have gone up to Jerusalem with Ezra, while the order to which they belonged is not specified. Among the priests who had married strange wives (x. 18–22) are named, sons of Jeshua, Immer, Harim, Pashur; whence it has been inferred "that, till the time of Ezra, only the four divisions of priests here enumerated had the charge of divine worship in the new congregation" (Bertheau). On the relation of the names in vers. 36–39 to those in Neh. x. 3–9 and xii. 1–22, see remarks on these passages.

Vers. 40–58. *Levites, Nethinim, and Solomon's servants.* Comp. Neh. vii. 43–60.

	Ezra.	Neh.
Levites: the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the sons of Hodaviah, ...	74	74
Singers: sons of Asaph, ...	128	148
Sons of the door-keepers; sons of Shallum, Ater, etc.,	139	138
Nethinim and servants of Solomon, in all, . .	392	392
Total,	733	752

The Levites are divided into three classes: Levites in the stricter sense of the word, *i.e.* assistants of the priests in divine worship, singers, and door-keepers; comp. 1 Chron. xxiv. 20–31, xxv., and xxvi. 1–19. Of Levites in the stricter sense are specified the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel of the sons of Hodaviah (וְקַדְמִיאֵל and הוֹדַוְיָה of our text are evidently correct readings; and לְקַדְמִיאֵל and הוֹדָיָה, Keri לְהוֹדִיָה, Neh. vii. 43, errors of transcription). The addition, "of the sons of Hodaviah," belongs to Kadmiel, to distinguish him from other Levites of similar name. Jeshua and Kadmiel were, according to iii. 9, chiefs of two orders of Levites in the times of Zerubbabel and Joshua. These names recur as names of orders of Levites in Neh. x. 10. We do not find the sons of Hodaviah in the lists of Levites in Chronicles.—Ver. 41. Of singers, only the sons of Asaph, *i.e.* members of the choir of Asaph, returned. In Neh. xi. 17 three orders are named, Bakbukiah evidently representing the order of Heman.—Ver. 42. Of door-keepers, six orders or divisions returned, among which those of Shallum, Talmon, and Akkub dwelt, according to 1 Chron. ix. 17, at Jerusalem before the captivity. Of the sons of Ater, Hatita and Shobai, nothing further is known.—Ver. 43. The Nethinim, *i.e.* temple-bondsmen, and the servants of Solomon, are reckoned together, thirty-five families of Nethinim and ten of the servants of Solomon being specified. The sum-total of these amounting only to 392, each family could only have averaged from eight to nine individuals. The sons of Akkub, Hagab and Asnah (vers. 45, 46, and 50), are omitted in Nehemiah; the name Shamlai (ver. 46) is in Neh. vii. 48 written Salmai; and for נפיסים, ver. 50, Neh. vii. 52 has נפוּשסים, a form combined from נְפוּסִים and נְפִישִׁים. All other variations relate only to differ-

ences of form. Because Ziha (צִיחָא, ver. 43) again occurs in Neh. xi. 21 as one of the chiefs of the Nethinim, and the names following seem to stand in the same series with it, Bertheau insists on regarding these names as those of divisions. This cannot, however, be correct; for Ziha is in Neh. xi. 21 the name of an individual, and in the present list also the proper names are those of individuals, and only the sons of Ziha, Hasupha, etc., can be called families or divisions. Plural words alone, Mehunim and Nephisim, are names of races or nations; hence the sons of the Mehunim signify individuals belonging to the Mehunim, who, perhaps, after the victory of King Uzziah over that people, were as prisoners of war made vassals for the service of the sanctuary. So likewise may the sons of the Nephisim have been prisoners of war of the Ishmaelite race נְפִישׁ. Most of the families here named may, however, have been descendants of the Gibeonites (Josh. ix. 21, 27). The servants of Solomon must not be identified with the Canaanite bond-servants mentioned 1 Kings ix. 20 sq., 2 Chron. viii. 7 sq., but were probably prisoners of war of some other nation, whom Solomon sentenced to perform, as bondsmen, similar services to those imposed upon the Gibeonites. The sons of these servants are again mentioned in Neh. xi. 3. In other passages they are comprised under the general term Nethinim, with whom they are here computed. Among the names, that of פֹּכֶרֶת הַצְּבָיִם (ver. 57), *i.e.* catcher of gazelles, is a singular one; the last name, אָמִי, is in Neh. vii. 59 אָמוֹן.

Vers. 59 and 60. Those who went up with, but could not prove that they pertained to, the nation of Israel. Comp. Neh. vii. 61 and 62.—Three such families are named, consisting of 652, or according to Nehemiah of 642, persons. These went up, with those who returned, from Tel-melah (Salthill) and Tel-harsa (Thicket or Forest Hill), names of Babylonian districts or regions, the situations of which cannot be ascertained. The words also which follow, כְּרוּב אַדָּן אִמֵּר, are obscure, but are certainly not the names of individuals, the persons who went up not being specified till ver. 60. The words are names of places, but it is uncertain whether

the three are used to express one or three places. In favour of the notion that they designate but one locality, may be alleged that in ver. 60 only three races are named, which would then correspond with the districts named in ver. 59: Tel-melah, Tel-harsa, and Cherub-Addan-Immer; a race from each district joining those who went up to Jerusalem. The three last words, however, may also designate three places in close proximity, in which one of the races of ver. 60 might be dwelling. These could not show their father's house and their seed, *i.e.* genealogy, whether they were of Israel. הֵם, as well as the suffixes of זַרְעָם and בֵּית־אֲבוֹתָם, refers to the persons named in ver. 60. They could not show that the houses of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda, after which they were called, belonged to Israel, nor that they themselves were of Israelitish origin. Cler. well remarks: *Judaicam religionem dudum sequebantur, quam ob rem se Judæos censebant; quamvis non possent genealogicas ullas tabulas ostendere, ex quibus constaret, ex Hebræis oriundos esse.* One of these names, Nekoda, ver. 48, occurring among those of the Nethinim, Bertheau conjectures that while the sons of Nekoda here spoken of claimed to belong to Israel, the objection was made that they might belong to the sons of Nekoda mentioned ver. 48, and ought therefore to be reckoned among the Nethinim. Similar objections may have been made to the two other houses. Although they could not prove their Israelite origin, they were permitted to go up to Jerusalem with the rest, the rights of citizenship alone being for the present withheld. Hence we meet with none of these names either in the enumeration of the heads and houses of the people, Neh. x. 15–28, or in the list Ezra x. 25–43.

Vers. 61–63. *Priests* who could not prove themselves members of the priesthood. Comp. Neh. vii. 63–65.—Three such families are named: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai. These could not discover their family registers, and were excluded from the exercise of priestly functions. Of these three names, that of Hakkoz occurs as the seventh order of priests; but the names

alone did not suffice to prove their priesthood, this being also borne by other persons. Comp. Neh. iii. 4. The sons of Barzillai were the descendants of a priest who had married a daughter, probably an heiress (Num. xxxvi.), of Barzillai the Gileadite, so well known in the history of David (2 Sam. xvii. 27, xix. 32–39; 1 Kings ii. 7), and had taken her name for the sake of taking possession of her inheritance (the suffix שְׁמָם refers to בָּנוֹת; see on Num. xxvii. 1–11). That by contracting this marriage he had not renounced for himself and his descendants his priestly privileges, is evident from the fact, that when his posterity returned from captivity, they laid claim to these privileges. The assumption, however, of the name of Barzillai might have cast such a doubt upon their priestly origin as to make it necessary that this should be proved from the genealogical registers, and a search in these did not lead to the desired discovery. כְּתָבָם is their סֵפֶר יֻחַשׂ, Neh. vii. 5, the book or record in which their genealogy was registered. The title of this record was הַמִּתְיַחְשִׂים, the Enregistered: the word is in apposition to כְּתָבָם, and the plural נִמְצְאוּ agrees with it, while in Neh. vii. 64 the singular נִמְצָא agrees with כתבם. They were declared to be polluted from the priesthood, *i.e.* they were excluded from the priesthood as polluted or unclean. The construction of the Pual יִגְּאֲלוּ with מִן is significant.—Ver. 63. The Tirshatha, the secular governor of the community, *i.e.*, as is obvious from a comparison of Neh. vii. 65 with ver. 70, Zerubbabel, called Hagg. i. 1 פַּחַת יְהוּדָה. תִּרְשָׁתָא, always used with the article, is undoubtedly the Persian designation of the governor or viceroy. Nehemiah is also so called in Neh. viii. 9 and x. 2, and likewise הַפֶּחָה, Neh. xii. 26. The meaning of the word is still matter of dispute. Some derive it from the Persian ترسیدن, to fear, and ترس, fear = the feared or respected one (Meier, *Wurzelb.* p. 714); others from ترش, *acer, auster,* the strict ruler; others, again (with Benfey, *die Monatsnamen,* p. 196), from the Zend. *thvôrestar* (nom. thvôresta), *i.e. præfectus, penes quem est imperium:* comp. Gesenius, *thes.* p. 1521. The Tirshatha decided that

they were not to eat of the most holy things till there should arise a priest with Urim and Thummim, *i.e.* to give a final decision by means of Urim and Thummim. עָמַד, according to the later usage of the language, is equivalent to קוּם; comp. Dan. viii. 83, xi. 2, and other places. The prohibition to eat of the most holy things (comp. on Lev. ii. 3) involved the prohibition to approach the most holy objects, *e.g.* the altar of burnt-offering (Ex. xxix. 37, xxx. 10), and to enter the most holy place, and thus excludes from specific priestly acts; without, however, denying a general inclusion among the priestly order, or abolishing a claim to the priestly revenues, so far as these were not directly connected with priestly functions. On Urim and Thummim, see on Ex. xxviii. 30. From the words, "till a priest shall arise," etc., it is evident that the then high priest was not in a position to entreat, and to pronounce, the divine decision by Urim and Thummim. The reason of this, however, need not be sought in the personality of Joshua (Ewald, *Gesch.* iv. 95), nor supposed to exist in such a fact as that he might not perhaps have been the eldest son of his father, and therefore not have had full right to the priesthood. This conjecture rests upon utterly erroneous notions of the Urim and Thummim, upon a subjectivistic view, which utterly evaporates the objective reality of the grace with which the high priest was in virtue of his office endowed. The obtainment of the divine decision by Urim and Thummim presupposes the gracious presence of Jahve in the midst of His people Israel. And this had been connected by the Lord Himself with the ark of the covenant, and with its cherubim-overshadowed mercy-seat, from above which He communed with His people (Ex. xxv. 22). The high priest, bearing upon his breast the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim, was to appear before Jahve, and, bringing before Him the judgment of Israel, to entreat the divine decision (Ex. xxviii. 30; Num. xxvii. 21). The ark of the covenant with the mercy-seat was thus, in virtue of the divine promise, the place of judgment, where the high priest was to inquire of the Lord by means of the Urim and Thummim. This ark, however, was

no longer in existence, having been destroyed when Solomon's temple was burned by the Chaldeans. Those who returned with Zerubbabel were without the ark, and at first without a temple. In such a state of affairs the high priest could not appear before Jahve with the breastplate and the Urim and Thummim to entreat His decision. The books of Samuel, indeed, relate cases in which the divine will was consulted by Urim and Thummim, when the ark of the covenant was not present for the high priest to appear before (comp. 1 Sam. xxiii. 4, 6, 9, etc., xiv. 18); whence it appears that the external or local presence of the ark was not absolutely requisite for this purpose. Still these cases occurred at a time when the congregation of Israel as yet possessed the ark with the Lord's cherubim-covered mercy-seat, though this was temporarily separated from the holy of holies of the tabernacle. Matters were in a different state at the return from the captivity. Then, not only were they without either ark or temple, but the Lord had not as yet re-manifested His gracious presence in the congregation; and till this should take place, the high priest could not inquire of the Lord by Urim and Thummim. In the hope that with the restoration of the altar and temple the Lord would again vouchsafe His presence to the returned congregation, Zerubbabel expected that a high priest would arise with Urim and Thummim to pronounce a final decision with regard to those priests who could not prove their descent from Aaron's posterity. This expectation, however, was unfulfilled. Zerubbabel's temple remained unconsecrated by any visible token of Jahve's presence, as the place where His name should dwell. The ark of the covenant with the cherubim, and the Shechinah in the cloud over the cherubim, were wanting in the holy of holies of this temple. Hence, too, we find no single notice of any declaration of the divine will or the divine decision by Urim and Thummim in the period subsequent to the captivity; but have, on the contrary, the unanimous testimony of the Rabbis, that after the Babylonian exile God no longer manifested His will by Urim and Thummim, this kind of divine revelation being reckoned by

them among the five things which were wanting in the second temple. Comp. Buxtorf, *exercitat. ad historiam Urim et Thummim*, c. 5; and Vitringa, *observat. ss.* Lib. vi. c. 6, p. 324 sq.

Vers. 64–67. The whole number of those who returned, their servants, maids, and beasts of burden. Comp. Neh. vii. 66–69.—The sum-total of the congregation (כְּאֶחָד, as one, *i.e.* reckoned together; comp. iii. 9, vi. 20) is the same in both texts, as also in 1 Esdras, viz. 42,360; the sums of the separate statements being in all three different, and indeed amounting in each to less than the given total. The separate statements are as follow:—

	According to Ezra.	According to Nehemiah.	According to 1 Esdras.
Men of Israel, . . .	24,144	25,406	26,390
Priests, ...	4,289	4,289	2,388
Levites, . . .	341	360	341
Nethinim and servants of Solomon,	392	392	372
Those who could not prove their Israelitish origin, . . .	652	642	652
Total,	29,818	31,089	30,143

These differences are undoubtedly owing to mere clerical errors, and attempts to reconcile them in other ways cannot be justified. Many older expositors, both Jewish and Christian (Seder olam, Raschi, Ussher, J. H. Mich., and others), were of opinion that only Jews and Benjamites are enumerated in the separate statements, while the sum-total includes also those Israelites of the ten tribes who returned with them. In opposing this notion, it cannot, indeed, be alleged that no regard at all is had to members of the other tribes (Bertheau); for the several families of the men of Israel are not designated according to their tribes, but merely as those whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken away to Babylon; and among these would certainly be included, as Ussher expressly affirms, many belonging to the other tribes who had settled in the kingdom of Judah. But the very circumstances, that neither in the separate statements nor in the sum-total is any allusion made to tribal relations,

and that even in the case of those families who could not prove their Israelitish origin the only question was as to whether they were of the houses and of the seed of Israel, exclude all distinction of tribes, and the sum-total is evidently intended to be the joint sum of the separate numbers. Nor can it be inferred, as J. D. Mich. conjectures, that because the parallel verse to ver. 64 of our present chapter, viz. 1 Esdr. v. 41, reads thus, "And all of Israel from twelve years old and upwards, besides the servants and maids, were 42,360," the separate statements are therefore the numbers only of those of twenty years old and upwards, while the sum-total includes those also from twelve to twenty years of age. The addition "from twelve years and upwards" is devoid of critical value; because, if it had been genuine, the particular "from twenty years old and upwards" must have been added to the separate statements. Hence it is not even probable that the author of the 1st book of Esdras contemplated a reconciliation of the difference by this addition. In transcribing such a multitude of names and figures, errors could scarcely be avoided, whether through false readings of numbers or the omission of single items. The sum-total being alike in all three texts, we are obliged to assume its correctness.

Ver. 65, etc. "Besides these, their servants and their maids, 7337." אֵלֶּה is, by the accent, connected with the preceding words. The further statement, "And there were to them (*i.e.* they had) 200 singing men and singing women," is striking. The remark of Bertheau, that by לָהֶם the property of the community is intended to be expressed, is incorrect; לָהֶם denotes merely computation among, and does not necessarily imply proprietorship. J. D. Mich., adopting the latter meaning, thought that oxen and cows originally stood in the text, and were changed by transcribers into singing men and singing women, "for both words closely resemble each other in appearance in the Hebrew." Berth., on the contrary, remarks that שְׁוָרִים, oxen, might easily be exchanged for שָׁרִים or מְשֹׁרְרִים, but that שׁוֹר has no feminine form for the plural, and that פָּרוֹת, cows, is very

different from מְשֹׁרְרוֹת; that hence we are obliged to admit that in the original text שׁוֹרִים stood alone, and that after this word had been exchanged for מְשֹׁרְרִים, מְשֹׁרְרוֹת was added as its appropriate complement. Such fanciful notions can need no serious refutation. Had animals been spoken of as property, לָהֶם would not have been used, but a suffix, as in the enumeration of the animals in ver. 66. Besides, oxen and cows are not beasts of burden used in journeys, like the horses, mules, camels, and asses enumerated in ver. 66, and hence are here out of place. מְשֹׁרְרִים וּמְשֹׁרְרוֹת are singing men and singing women, in 1 Esdras ψάλται καὶ ψαλτῳδοί, who, as the Rabbis already supposed, were found among the followers of the returning Jews, *ut lætior esset Israelitarum reditus*. The Israelites had from of old employed singing men and singing women not merely for the purpose of enhancing the cheerfulness of festivities, but also for the singing of lamentations on sorrowful occasions; comp. Eccles. ii. 8, 2 Chron. xxxv. 25: these, because they sang and played for hire, are named along with the servants and maids, and distinguished from the Levitical singers and players. Instead of 200, we find both in Nehemiah and 1 Esdras the number 245, which probably crept into the text from the transcriber fixing his eye upon the 245 of the following verse.—Ver. 66. The numbers of the beasts, whether for riding or baggage: horses, 736; mules, 245; camels, 435; and asses, 6720. The numbers are identical in Neh. vii. 68. In 1 Esdr. v. 42 the camels are the first named, and the numbers are partially different, viz., horses, 7036, and asses, 5525.

Vers. 68–70. *Contributions towards the rebuilding of the temple, and concluding remarks.* Comp. Neh. vii. 70–73.—Some of the heads of houses, when they came to the house of Jahve, *i.e.* arrived at the site of the temple, brought free-will offerings (הִתְנַדֵּב; comp. 1 Chron. xxix. 5) to set it up in its place (הֲעֲמִיד, to set up, *i.e.* to rebuild; identical in meaning both here and ix. 9 with הֵקִים). After their ability (כְּכֹחָם; comp. 1 Chron. xxix. 2) they gave unto the treasure of the work, *i.e.* of restoring the temple and its services,

61,000 darics of gold = £68,625, and 5000 mina of silver, above £30,000, and 100 priests' garments. The account of these contributions is more accurately given in Neh. vii. 70–72, according to which some of the heads of houses gave unto the work (מְקֹצָת as Dan. i. 2 and elsewhere); the Tirshatha gave to the treasure 1000 darics of gold, 50 sacrificial vessels (see on Ex. xxvii. 3), 30 priests' garments, and 500 . . . This last statement is defective; for the two numbers 30 and 500 must not be combined into 530, as in this case the hundreds would have stood first. The objects enumerated were named before 500, and are omitted through a clerical error, וְכֶסֶף מָנִים, "and silver (500) mina." And some of the heads of houses (others than the Tirshatha) gave of gold 20,000 darics, of silver, 2200 mina; and that which the rest of the people gave was —gold, 20,000 darics, silver, 2000 mina, and 67 priests' garments. According to this statement, the Tirshatha, the heads of houses, and the rest of the people, gave together 41,000 darics in gold, 4200 mina in silver, 97 priests' garments, and 30 golden vessels. In Ezra the vessels are omitted; and instead of the 30 + 67 = 97 priests' garments, they are stated in round numbers to have been 100. The two other differences have arisen from textual errors. Instead of 61,000 darics, it is evident that we must read with Nehemiah, 41,000 (1000+20,000+20,000); and in addition to the 2200 and 2000 mina, reckon, according to Neh. vii. 70, 500 more, in all 4700, for which in the text of Ezra we have the round sum of 5000. The account of the return of the first band of exiles concludes at ver. 70, and the narrative proceeds to the subsequent final statement: "So the priests, etc. . . . dwelt in their cities." וּמִן הָעָם, those of the people, are the men of the people of Israel of ver. 2, the laity as distinguished from the priests, Levites, etc. In Nehemiah the words are transposed, so that מן העם stand after the Levitical door-keepers and singers. Bertheau thinks this position more appropriate; but we cannot but judge otherwise. The placing of the people, *i.e.* the laity of Israel, between the consecrated servants of the temple (the

priests and their Levitical assistants in the sacrificial service) and the singers and door-keepers, seems to us quite consistent; while, on the other hand, the naming of the שׁוֹעֲרִים before the מְשֹׁרְרִים in Nehemiah seems inappropriate, because the performance of the choral service of the temple was a higher office than the guardianship of the doors. Neither can we regard Bertheau's view, that בְּעָרֵיהֶם, which in the present verse follows וְהַנְּתִינִים, should be erased, as a correct one. The word forms a perfectly appropriate close to the sentence beginning with וַיֵּשְׁבוּ; and the sentence following, "And all Israel were in their cities," forms a well-rounded close to the account; while, on the contrary, the summing up of the different divisions by the words כל־ישׂראל in Nehemiah, after the enumeration of those divisions, has a rather heavy effect.[1]

CHAP. III. — THE ALTAR OF BURNT-OFFERING ERECTED, THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES CELEBRATED, AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE TEMPLE LAID.

On the approach of the seventh month, the people assembled in Jerusalem to restore the altar of burnt-offering and the sacrificial worship, and to keep the feast of tabernacles (vers. 1–7); and in the second month of the following year the foundations of the new temple were laid with due solemnity (vers. 8–13). Comp. 1 Esdr. v. 46–62.

Vers. 1–7. *The building of the altar, the restoration of the daily sacrifice, and the celebration of the feast of tabernacles.* —Ver. 1. When the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. The year is not stated, but *the* year in which they returned from Babylon is intended, as appears from ver. 8, which tells us that the

[1] In 1 Esdr. v. 46, this verse, freely carrying out the texts of Ezra and Nehemiah, with regard also to Neh. xii. 27–30, runs thus: "And so dwelt the priests, and the Levites, and the people, in Jerusalem and in the country, the singers also and the porters, and all Israel in their villages."

foundations of the temple were laid in the second month of the second year of their return. The words, "and the children of Israel were in the cities," are a circumstantial clause referring to ii. 70, and serving to elucidate what follows. From the cities, in which each had settled in his own (ii. 1), the people came to Jerusalem as one man, *i.e.* not entirely (Bertheau), but unanimously (ὁμοθυμαδόν, 1 Esdr. v. 46); comp. Neh. viii. 1, Judg. xx. 1.[1]—Ver. 2. Then the two leaders of the people, Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the prince (see on ii. 2), with their brethren, *i.e.* the priests and the men of Israel (the laity), arose and built the altar, to offer upon it burnt-offerings, as prescribed by the law of Moses, *i.e.* to restore the legal sacrifices. According to ver. 6, the offering of burnt-offerings began on the first day of the seventh month; hence the altar was by this day already completed. This agrees with the statement, "When the seventh month approached" (ver. 1), therefore before the first day of this month.—Ver. 3. They reared the altar עַל־מְכוֹנָתוֹ, upon its (former) place; not, upon its bases. The feminine מְכוֹנָה has here a like signification with the masculine form מָכוֹן, ii. 68, and מְכוּנָה, Zech. v. 11. The Keri מְכוֹנֹתָו is an incorrect revision. "For fear was upon them, because of the people of those countries." The בְּ prefixed to אֵימָה is the so-called בְּ *essentiæ*, expressing the being in a condition; properly, a being in fear had come or lay upon them. Comp. on ב *essentiæ*, Ewald, § 217, *f*, and 299, *b*, though in § 295, *f*, he seeks to interpret this passage differently. The "people of those countries" are the people dwelling in the neighbourhood of the new community; comp. ix. 1, x. 2. The notion is: They erected the altar and restored the worship of Jahve, for the purpose of securing the divine protection, because fear of the surrounding heathen population had fallen upon them. J. H. Mich. had already a correct notion of the verse when

[1] The more precise statement of 1 Esdr. v. 46, εἰς τὸ εὐρύχωρον τοῦ πρώτου πυλῶνος τοῦ πρὸς τῇ ἀνατολῇ, according to which Bertheau insists upon correcting the text of Ezra, is an arbitrary addition on the part of the author of this apocryphal book, and derived from Neh. viii. 1.

he wrote: *ut ita periculi metus eos ad Dei opem quærendam impulerit.*[1] Comp. the similar case in 2 Kings xvii. 25 sq., when the heathen colonists settled in the deserted cities of Samaria entreated the king of Assyria to send them a priest to teach them the manner of worshipping the God of the land, that thus they might be protected from the lions which infested it. The Chethiv ויעל must be taken impersonally: "one (they) offered;" but is perhaps only an error of transcription, and should be read וַיַּעֲלוּ. On the morning and evening sacrifices, see on Ex. xxviii. 38 sq., Num. xxviii. 3 sq.—Ver. 4. They kept the feast of tabernacles as prescribed in the law, Lev. xxiii. 34 sq. "The burnt-offering day by day, according to number," means the burnt-offerings commanded for the several days of this festival, viz. on the first day thirteen oxen, on the second twelve, etc.; comp. Num. xxix. 13–34, where the words בְּמִסְפָּרָם כְּמִשְׁפָּט, vers. 18, 21, 24, etc., occur, which are written in our present verse בְּמִסְפָּר כְּמ׳, by number, *i.e.* counted; comp. 1 Chron. ix. 28, xxiii. 31, etc. —Ver. 5. And afterward, *i.e.* after the feast of tabernacles, they offered the continual, *i.e.* the daily, burnt-offering, and (the offerings) for the new moon, and all the festivals of the Lord (the annual feasts). עֹלוֹת must be inserted from the context before לְחָדְשִׁים to complete the sense. "And for every one that willingly offered a free-will offering to the Lord." נְדָבָה is a burnt-offering which was offered from free inclination. Such offerings might be brought on any day, but were chiefly presented at the annual festivals after the sacrifices prescribed by the law; comp. Num. xxix. 39. —In ver. 6 follows the supplementary remark, that the sacrificial worship began from the first day of the seventh month, but that the foundation of the temple of the Lord

[1] Bertheau, on the contrary, cannot understand the meaning of this sentence, and endeavours, by an alteration of the text after 1 Esdras, to make it signify that some of the people of the countries came with the purpose of obstructing the building of the altar, but that the Israelites were able to effect the erection because a fear of God came upon the neighbouring nations, and rendered them incapable of hostile interference.

was not yet laid. This forms a transition to what follows.[1] —Ver. 7. Preparations were also made for the rebuilding of the temple; money was given to hewers of wood and to masons, and meat and drink (*i.e.* corn and wine) and oil to the Sidonians and Tyrians (*i.e.* the Phœnicians; comp. 1 Chron. xxii. 4), to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa (*i.e.* to the coast of Joppa), as was formerly done by Solomon, 1 Kings v. 20 sq., 2 Chron. ii. 7 sq. כְּרִשְׁיוֹן, according to the grant of Cyrus to them, *i.e.* according to the permission given them by Cyrus, *sc.* to rebuild the temple. For nothing is said of any special grant from Cyrus with respect to wood for building. רִשְׁיוֹן is in

[1] Bertheau, comparing ver. 6 with ver. 5, incorrectly interprets it as meaning: "From the first day of the seventh month the offering of *thank-offerings* began (comp. ver. 2); then, from the fifteenth day of the second month, during the feast of tabernacles, the burnt-offerings prescribed by the law (ver. 4); but the daily burnt-offerings were not recommenced till after the feast of tabernacles, etc. *Hence it was not from the first day of the seventh month, but subsequently to the feast of tabernacles*, that the worship of God, so far as this consisted in burnt-offerings, was fully restored." The words of the cursive manuscript, however, do not stand in the text, but their opposite. In ver. 2, not thank-offerings (זְבָחִים or שְׁלָמִים), but burnt-offerings (עֹלוֹת), are spoken of, and indeed those prescribed in the law, among which the daily morning and evening burnt-offering, expressly named in ver. 3, held the first place. With this, ver. 5, "After the feast of tabernacles they offered the continual burnt-offering, and the burnt-offerings for the new moon," etc., fully harmonizes. The offering of the continual, *i.e.* of the daily, burnt-offerings, besides the new moon, the feast-days, and the free-will offerings, is named again merely for the sake of completeness. The right order is, on the contrary, as follows: The altar service, with the daily morning and evening sacrifice, began on the first day of the seventh month; this daily sacrifice was regularly offered, according to the law, from then till the fifteenth day of the second month, *i.e.* till the beginning of the feast of tabernacles; all the offerings commanded in the law for the separate days of this feast were then offered according to the numbers prescribed; and after this festival the sacrifices ordered at the new moon and the other holy days of the year were offered, as well as the daily burnt-offerings,—none but these, neither the sacrifice on the new moon (the first day of the seventh month) nor the sin-offering on the tenth day of the same month, *i.e.* the day of atonement, having been offered before this feast of tabernacles.

the O. T. *ἅπ. λεγ.*; in Chaldee and rabbinical Hebrew, רְשָׁא and רְשִׁי mean *facultatem habere;* and רְשׁוּ power, permission.

Vers. 8–13. *The foundation of the temple laid.*—Ver. 8. In the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, *i.e.* after their arrival at Jerusalem on their return from Babylon, in the second month, began Zerubbabel and Joshua to appoint the Levites from twenty years old and upwards to the oversight of the work (the building) of the house of the LORD. That is to say, the work of building was taken in hand. Whether this second year of the return coincides with the second year of the rule of Cyrus, so that the foundations of the temple were laid, as *Theophil. Antioch. ad Autolic.* lib. 3, according to Berosus, relates, in the second year of Cyrus, cannot be determined. For nothing more is said in this book than that Cyrus, in the first year of his reign, issued the decree concerning the return of the Jews from Babylon, whereupon those named in the list, chap. ii., set out and returned, without any further notice as to whether this also took place in the first year of Cyrus, or whether the many necessary preparations delayed the departure of the first band till the following year. The former view is certainly a possible though not a very probable one, since it is obvious from ii. 1 that they arrived at Jerusalem and betook themselves to their cities as early as the seventh month of the year. Now the period between the beginning of the year and the seventh month, *i.e.* at most six months, seems too short for the publication of the edict, the departure, and the arrival at Jerusalem, even supposing that the first year of Cyrus entirely coincided with a year of the Jewish calendar. The second view, however, would not make the difference between the year of the rule of Cyrus and the year of the return to Jerusalem a great one, since it would scarcely amount to half a year. הֵחֵלּוּ . . . וַיַּעֲמִידוּ, they began and appointed, etc., they began to appoint, *i.e.* they began the work of building the temple by appointing. Those enumerated are—1. Zerubbabel and Joshua, the two rulers: 2. The remnant of their brethren = their other brethren, viz. *a*, the priests and

Levites as brethren of Joshua; *b*, all who had come out of captivity, *i.e.* the men of Israel, as brethren of Zerubbabel. These together formed the community who appointed the Levites to preside over, *i.e.* to conduct the building of the temple. For the expression, comp. 1 Chron. xxiii. 4–24. —Ver. 9. The Levites undertook this appointment, and executed the commission. The singular וַיַּעֲמֹד stands before a plural subject, as is frequently the case when the verb precedes its subject. Three classes or orders of Levites are named: 1. Jeshua with his sons and brethren; 2. Kadmiel with his sons, the sons of Hodaviah; 3. The sons of Henadad, their sons and brethren. Jeshua and Kadmiel are the two heads of orders of Levites already named (ii. 40). From a comparison of these passages, we perceive that בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה is a clerical error for הוֹדַוְיָה (or הוֹדַיְהוּ) בְּנֵי. This more precise designation is not "a comprehensive appellation for all hitherto enumerated" (Bertheau), but, as is undoubtedly obvious from ii. 40, only a more precise designation of the sons of Kadmiel. כְּאֶחָד, as one, *i.e.* all, without exception. The third class, the sons of Henadad, are not expressly named in ii. 40 among those who returned from Babylon; but a son of Henadad appears, Neh. iii. 24 and x. 10, as head of an order of Levites. The naming of this order after the predicate, in the form of a supplementary notice, and unconnected by a ו cop., is striking. Bertheau infers therefrom that the construction of the sentence is incorrect, and desires to alter it according to 1 Esdr. v. 56, where indeed this class is named immediately after the two first, but בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה is separated from what precedes; and of these בני יהודה is made a fourth class, *υἱοὶ Ἰωδά τοῦ Ἡλιαδούδ*. All this sufficiently shows that this text cannot be regarded as authoritative. The striking position or supplementary enumeration of the sons of Henadad may be explained by the fact to which the placing of כְּאֶחָד after בני יהודה points, viz. that the two classes, Jeshua with his sons and brethren, and Kadmiel with his sons, were more closely connected with each other than with the sons of Henadad, who formed a third class. The הַלְוִיִּם

at the end of the enumeration offers no argument for the transposition of the words, though this addition pertains not only to the sons of Henadad, but also to the two first classes. עֹשֵׂי הַמ' is plural, and only an unusual reading for עֹשֵׂי; see on 1 Chron. xxiii. 24.—Ver. 10. When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they (Zerubbabel and Joshua, the heads of the community) set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD after the ordinance of David. The perf. וַיִּסְּדוּ, followed by an imperf. connected by a *Vav* consecutive, must be construed: When they laid the foundations, then. מְלֻבָּשִׁים, clothed, *sc.* in their robes of office; comp. 2 Chron. v. 12, xx. 21. עַל יְדֵי as 1 Chron. xxv. 2. On ver. 11, comp. remarks on 1 Chron. xvi. 34, 41, 2 Chron. v. 13, vii. 3, and elsewhere. Older expositors (Clericus, J. H. Mich.), referring to Ex. xv. 21, understand וַיַּעֲנוּ בְהַלֵּל of the alternative singing of two choirs, one of which sang, "Praise the Lord, for He is good;" and the other responded, "And His mercy endureth for ever." In the present passage, however, there is no decided allusion to responsive singing; hence (with Bertheau) we take יַעֲנוּ in the sense of, "They sang to the Lord with hymns of thanksgiving." Probably they sang such songs as Ps. cvi., cvii., or cxviii., which commence with an invitation to praise the Lord because He is good, etc. All the people, moreover, raised a loud shout of joy. תְּרוּעָה גְדוֹלָה is repeated in ver. 13 by תְּרוּעַת הַשִּׂמְחָה. עַל הוּסַד, on account of the founding, of the foundation-laying, of the house of the Lord. הוּסַד as in 2 Chron. iii. 3.—Ver. 12. But many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the people, the old men who had seen (also) the former temple, at the foundation of this house before their eyes (*i.e.* when they saw the foundation of this house laid), wept with a loud voice. Solomon's temple was destroyed B.C. 588, and the foundation of the subsequent temple laid B.C. 535 or 534: hence the older men among those present at the latter event might possibly have seen the former house; indeed, some (according to Hagg. ii. 2) were still living in the second year of Darius

Hystaspis who had beheld the glory of the earlier building. Upon these aged men, the miserable circumstances under which the foundations of the new temple were laid produced so overwhelming an impression, that they broke into loud weeping. בְּיִסְדוֹ is connected by its accents with the words preceding: the former temple in its foundation, *i.e.* in its stability. But this can scarcely be correct. For not only does no noun יְסֹד, foundation, occur further on; but even the following words, "of this house before their eyes," if severed from בְּיִסְדוֹ, have no meaning. Hence (with Aben Ezra, Cler., Berth., and others) we connect בְּיִסְדוֹ with the parenthetical sentence following, "when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes;" and then the suffix of the infinitive יְסֹדוֹ expressly refers to the object following, as is sometimes the case in Hebrew, *e.g.* 2 Chron. xxvi. 14, Ezra ix. 1, and mostly in Chaldee; comp. Ew. § 209, *c*, "But many were in rejoicing and joy to raise their voices," *i.e.* many so joyed and rejoiced that they shouted aloud.— Ver. 13. And the people could not discern (distinguish) the loud cry of joy in the midst of (beside) the loud weeping of the people; for the people rejoiced with loud rejoicings, and the sound was heard afar off. The meaning is not, that the people could not hear the loud weeping of the older priests, Levites, and heads of the people, because it was overpowered by the loud rejoicings of the multitude. The verse, on the contrary, contains a statement that among the people also (the assembly exclusive of priests, Levites, and chiefs) a shout of joy and a voice of weeping arose; but that the shouting for joy of the multitude was so loud, that the sounds of rejoicing and weeping could not be distinguished from each other. הִכִּיר, with the acc. and לְ, to perceive something in the presence of (along with) another, *i.e.* to distinguish one thing from another. "The people could not discern" means: Among the multitude the cry of joy could not be distinguished from the noise of weeping. עַד לְמֶרְחוֹק as 2 Chron. xxvi. 15.

CHAP. IV.—HINDRANCES TO BUILDING THE TEMPLE. ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE JEWS CONCERNING THE BUILDING OF THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

Vers. 1–5. The adversaries of the Jews prevent the building of the temple till the reign of Darius (vers. 1, 2). When the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the community which had returned from captivity were beginning to rebuild the temple, they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chiefs of the people, and desired to take part in this work, because they also sacrificed to the God of Israel. These adversaries were, according to ver. 2, the people whom Esarhaddon king of Assyria had settled in the neighbourhood of Benjamin and Judah. If we compare with this verse the information (2 Kings xvii. 24) that the kings of Assyria brought men from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria, and that they took possession of the depopulated kingdom of the ten tribes, and dwelt therein; then these adversaries of Judah and Benjamin are the inhabitants of the former kingdom of Israel, who were called Samaritans after the central-point of their settlement. בְּנֵי הַגּוֹלָה, sons of the captivity (vi. 19, etc., viii. 35, x. 7, 16), also shortly into הַגּוֹלָה, *e.g.* i. 11, are the Israelites returned from the Babylonian captivity, who composed the new community in Judah and Jerusalem. Those who returned with Zerubbabel, and took possession of the dwelling-places of their ancestors, being, exclusive of priests and Levites, chiefly members of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, are called, especially when named in distinction from the other inhabitants of the land, Judah and Benjamin. The adversaries give the reason of their request to share in the building of the temple in the words: "For we seek your God as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, which brought us up hither." The words וְלֹא אֲנַחְנוּ זֹבְחִים are variously explained. Older expositors take the Chethiv וְלֹא as a negative, and make זֹבְחִים to mean the offering of sacrifices to idols, both because

לֹא is a negative, and also because the assertion that they had sacrificed to Jahve would not have pleased the Jews, *quia deficiente templo non debuerint sacrificare;* and sacrifices not offered in Jerusalem were regarded as equivalent to sacrifices to idols. They might, moreover, fitly strengthen their case by the remark: "Since the days of Esarhaddon we offer no sacrifices to idols." On the other hand, however, it is arbitrary to understand זָבַח, without any further definition, of sacrificing to idols; and the statement, "We already sacrifice to the God of Israel," contains undoubtedly a far stronger reason for granting their request than the circumstance that they do not sacrifice to idols. Hence we incline, with older translators (LXX., Syr., Vulg., 1 Esdras), to regard לֹא as an unusual form of לוֹ, occurring in several places (see on Ex. xxi. 8), the latter being also substituted in the present instance as Keri. The position also of לֹא before אֲנַחְנוּ points the same way, for the negative would certainly have stood with the verb. On Esarhaddón, see remarks on 2 Kings xix. 37 and Isa. xxxvii. 38.—Ver. 3. Zerubbabel and the other chiefs of Israel answer, "It is not for you and for us to build a house to our God;" *i.e.*, You and we cannot together build a house to the God who is our God; "but we alone will build it to Jahve the God of Israel, as King Cyrus commanded us." אֲנַחְנוּ יַחַד, we together, *i.e.* we alone (without your assistance). By the emphasis placed upon "our God" and "Jahve the God of Israel," the assertion of the adversaries, "We seek your God as ye do," is indirectly refuted. If Jahve is the God of Israel, He is not the God of those whom Esarhaddon brought into the land. The appeal to the decree of Cyrus (i. 3, comp. iii. 6, etc.) forms a strong argument for the sole agency of Jews in building the temple, inasmuch as Cyrus had invited those only who were of His (Jahve's) people (i. 3). Hence the leaders of the new community were legally justified in rejecting the proposal of the colonists brought in by Esarhaddon. For the latter were neither members of the people of Jahve, nor Israelites, nor genuine worshippers of Jahve. They were non-Israelites, and designated themselves

as those whom the king of Assyria had brought into the land. According to 2 Kings xvii. 24, the king of Assyria brought colonists from Babylon, Cuthah, and other places, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel. Now we cannot suppose that every Israelite, to the very last man, was carried away by the Assyrians; such a deportation of a conquered people being unusual, and indeed impossible. Apart, then, from the passage, 2 Chron. xxx. 6, etc., which many expositors refer to the time of the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, we find that in the time of King Josiah (2 Chron. xxxiv. 9), when the foreign colonists had been for a considerable period in the country, there were still remnants of Manasseh, of Ephraim, and of all Israel, who gave contributions for the house of God at Jerusalem; and also that in 2 Kings xxiii. 15–20 and 2 Chron. xxxiv. 6, a remnant of the Israelite inhabitants still existed in the former territory of the ten tribes. The eighty men, too, who (Jer. xli. 5, etc.) came, after the destruction of the temple, from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria, mourning, and bringing offerings and incense to Jerusalem, to the place of the house of God, which was still a holy place to them, were certainly Israelites of the ten tribes still left in the land, and who had probably from the days of Josiah adhered to the temple worship. These remnants, however, of the Israelite inhabitants in the territories of the former kingdom of the ten tribes, are not taken into account in the present discussion concerning the erection of the temple; because, however considerable their numbers might be, they formed no community independent of the colonists, but were dispersed among them, and without political influence. It is not indeed impossible "that the colonists were induced through the influence exercised upon them by the Israelites living in their midst to prefer to the Jews the request, 'Let us build with you;' still those who made the proposal were not Israelites, but the foreign colonists" (Bertheau). These were neither members of the chosen people nor worshippers of the God of Israel. At their first settlement (2 Kings xvii. 24, etc.) they evidently

feared not the Lord, nor did they learn to do so till the king of Assyria, at their request, sent them one of the priests who had been carried away to teach them the manner of worshipping the God of the land. This priest, being a priest of the Israelitish calf-worship, took up his abode at Bethel, and taught them to worship Jahve under the image of a golden calf. Hence arose a worship which is thus described, 2 Kings xvii. 29–33: Every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans, *i.e.* the former inhabitants of the kingdom of the ten tribes, had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. And besides their idols Nergal, Asima, Nibhaz, Tartak, they feared Jahve; they sacrificed to all these gods as well as to Him. A mixed worship which the prophet-historian (2 Kings xvii. 34) thus condemns: "They fear not the Lord, and do after their statutes and ordinances, not after the law and commandment which the Lord commanded to the sons of Jacob." And so, it is finally said (ver. 41), do also their children and children's children unto this day, *i.e.* about the middle of the Babylonian captivity; nor was it till a subsequent period that the Samaritans renounced gross idolatry. The rulers and heads of Judah could not acknowledge *that* Jahve whom the colonists worshipped as a local god, together with other gods, in the houses of the high places at Bethel and elsewhere, to be the God of Israel, to whom they were building a temple at Jerusalem. For the question was not whether they would permit Israelites who earnestly sought Jahve to participate in His worship at Jerusalem,—a permission which they certainly would have refused to none who sincerely desired to turn to the Lord God,—but whether they would acknowledge a mixed population of Gentiles and Israelites, whose worship was more heathen than Israelite, and who nevertheless claimed on its account to belong to the people of God.[1] To such, the

[1] The opinion of Knobel, that those who preferred the request were not the heathen colonists placed in the cities of Samaria by the Assyrian king (2 Kings xvii. 24), but the priests sent by the Assyrian king to Samaria (2 Kings xvii. 27), has been rejected as utterly unfounded by

rulers of Judah could not, without unfaithfulness to the Lord their God, permit a participation in the building of the Lord's house.

Ver. 4. In consequence of this refusal, the adversaries of Judah sought to weaken the hands of the people, and to deter them from building. עַם הָאָרֶץ, the people of the land, *i.e.* the inhabitants of the country, the colonists dwelling in the land, the same who in ver. 1 are called the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin. וַיְהִי followed by the participle expresses the continuance of the inimical attempts. To weaken the hands of any one, means to deprive him of strength and courage for action; comp. Jer. xxxviii. 4. עַם יְהוּדָה are the inhabitants of the realm of Judah, who, including the Benjamites, had returned from captivity, Judah being now used to designate the whole territory of the new community, as before the captivity the entire southern kingdom; comp. ver. 6. Instead of the Chethiv מְבַהֲלִים, the Keri offers מְבַעֲתִים, from בהל, *Piel*, to terrify, to alarm, 2 Chron. xxxii. 18, Job xxi. 6, because the verb בלה nowhere else occurs; but the noun בַּלָּהָה, fear, being not uncommon, and presupposing the existence of a verb בָּלַהּ, the correctness of the Chethiv cannot be impugned.—Ver. 5. And they hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose (of building the temple). וְסֹכְרִים still depends on the וַיְהִי of ver. 4. סָכַר is a later orthography of שָׂכַר, to hire, to bribe. Whether by the hiring of יוֹעֲצִים we are to understand the corruption of royal counsellors or ministers, or the appointment of legal agents to act against the Jewish community at the Persian court, and to endeavour to obtain an inhibition against the erection of the temple, does not appear. Thus much only is evident from the text, that the adversaries succeeded in frustrating the continuance of the building "all the days of Koresh," *i.e.* the yet remaining five years of Cyrus, who was for the space of seven years sole ruler of Babylon; while the machinations against the building, begun immediately after the laying of

Bertheau, who at the same time demonstrates, against Fritzsche on 1 Esdr. v. 65, the identity of the unnamed king of Assyria (2 Kings xvii. 24) with Esarhaddon.

its foundations in the second year of the return, had the effect, in the beginning of the third year of Cyrus (judging from Dan. x. 2), of putting a stop to the work until the reign of Darius, —in all, fourteen years, viz. five years of Cyrus, seven and a half of Cambyses, seven months of the Pseudo-Smerdis, and one year of Darius (till the second year of his reign).

Vers. 6–23. *Complaints against the Jews to Kings Ahashverosh and Artachshasta.*—The right understanding of this section depends upon the question, What kings of Persia are meant by Ahashverosh and Artachshasta? while the answer to this question is, in part at least, determined by the contents of the letter, 8–16, sent by the enemies of the Jews to the latter monarch.—Ver. 6. And in the reign of Ahashverosh, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. שִׂטְנָה, not to mention the name of the well, Gen. xxvi. 21, occurs here only, and means, according to its derivation from שָׂטַן, to bear enmity, the enmity; hence here, the accusation. עַל יֹשְׁבֵי belongs to שִׂטְנָה, not to כָּתְבוּ; the letter was sent, not to the inhabitants of Judah, but to the king against the Jews. The contents of this letter are not given, but may be inferred from the designation שִׂטְנָה. The letter to Artachshasta then follows, 7–16. In his days, *i.e.* during his reign, wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions. כְּנוֹתָו, for which the Keri offers the ordinary form כְּנָוָתָיו, occurs only here in the Hebrew sections, but more frequently in the Chaldee (comp. iv. 9, 17, 23, v. 3, and elsewhere), in the sense of companions or fellow-citizens; according to Gesenius, it means those who bear the same surname (Kunje) together with another, though Ewald is of a different opinion; see § 117, *b*, note. The singular would be written כְּנָת (Ewald, § 187, *d*). And the writing of the letter was written in Aramæan (*i.e.* with Aramæan characters), and interpreted in (*i.e.* translated into) Aramæan. נְשְׁתְּוָן is of Aryan origin, and connected with the modern Persian نوشتن *nuwishten*, to write together; it signifies in Hebrew and Chaldee a letter: comp. ver. 18, where נִשְׁתְּוָנָא

is used for אִגַּרְתָּא of ver. 11. Bertheau translates כְּתָב הַנִּשְׁתְּוָן, copy of the letter, and regards it as quite identical with the Chaldee פִּרְשֶׁגֶן אִגַּרְתָּא, ver. 11; he can hardly, however, be in the right. כְּתָב does not mean a transcript or copy, but only a writing (comp. Esth. iv. 8). This, too, does away with the inference "that the writer of this statement had before him only an Aramæan translation of the letter contained in the state-papers or chronicles which he made use of." It is not כְּתָב, the copy or writing, but הַנִּשְׁתְּוָן, the letter, that is the subject of מְתֻרְגָּם אֲרָמִית, interpreted in Aramæan. This was translated into the Aramæan or Syrian tongue. The passage is not to be understood as stating that the letter was drawn up in the Hebrew or Samaritan tongue, and then translated into Aramæan, but simply that the letter was not composed in the native language of the writers, but in Aramæan. Thus Gesenius rightly asserts, in his *Thes.* p. 1264, *et lingua aramæa scripta erat;* in saying which תרגם does not receive the meaning *concepit, expressit,* but retains its own signification, to interpret, to translate into another language. The writers of the letter were Samaritans, who, having sprung from the intermingling of the Babylonian settlers brought in by Esarhaddon and the remnants of the Israelitish population, spoke a language more nearly akin to Hebrew than to Aramæan, which was spoken at the Babylonian court, and was the official language of the Persian kings and the Persian authorities in Western Asia. This Aramæan tongue had also its own characters, differing from those of the Hebrew and Samaritan. This is stated by the words כְּתוּב אֲרָמִית, whence Bertheau erroneously infers that this Aramæan writing was written in other than the ordinary Aramæan, and perhaps in Hebrew characters. This letter, too, of Bishlam and his companions seems to be omitted. There follows, indeed, in ver. 8, etc., a letter to King Artachshasta, of which a copy is given in vers. 11–16; but the names of the writers are different from those mentioned in ver. 7. The three names, Bishlam, Mithredath, and Tabeel (ver. 7), cannot be identified with the two names Rehum and Shimshai (ver. 8).

When we consider, however, that the writers named in ver. 8 were high officials of the Persian king, sending to the monarch a written accusation against the Jews in their own and their associates' names, it requires but little stretch of the imagination to suppose that these personages were acting at the instance of the adversaries named in ver. 7, the Samaritans Bishlam, Mithredath, and Tabeel, and merely inditing the complaints raised by these opponents against the Jews. This view, which is not opposed by the כָּתַב of ver. 7,—this word not necessarily implying an autograph,—commends itself to our acceptance, first, because the notion that the contents of this letter are not given finds no analogy in ver. 6, where the contents of the letter to Ahashverosh are sufficiently hinted at by the word שִׂטְנָה; while, with regard to the letter of ver. 7, we should have not a notion of its purport in case it were not the same which is given in ver. 8, etc.[1] Besides, the statement concerning the Aramæan composition of this letter would have been utterly purposeless if the Aramæan letter following in ver. 8 had been an entirely different one. The information concerning the language in which the letter was written has obviously no other motive than to introduce its transcription in the original Aramæan. This conjecture becomes a certainty through the fact that the Aramæan letter follows in ver. 8 without a copula of any kind. If any other had been intended, the ו copulative would no more have been omitted here than in ver. 7. The letter itself, indeed, does not begin till ver. 9,

[1] The weight of this argument is indirectly admitted by Ewald (*Gesch.* iv. p. 119) and Bertheau, inasmuch as both suppose that there is a long gap in the narrative, and regard the Aramæan letter mentioned in ver. 7 to have been a petition, on the part of persons of consideration in the community at Jerusalem, to the new king,—two notions which immediately betray themselves to be the expedients of perplexity. The supposed "long gaps, which the chronicler might well leave even in transcribing from his documents" (Ew.), do not explain the abrupt commencement of ver. 8. If a petition from the Jewish community to the king were spoken of in ver. 7, the accusation against the Jews in ver. 8 would certainly have been alluded to by at least a ו adversative, or some other adversative particle.

while ver. 8 contains yet another announcement of it. This circumstance, however, is explained by the fact that the writers of the letters are other individuals than those named in ver. 7, but chiefly by the consideration that the letter, together with the king's answer, being derived from an Aramæan account of the building of the temple, the introduction to the letter found therein was also transcribed.

Ver. 8, etc. The writers of the letter are designated by titles which show them to have been among the higher functionaries of Artachshasta. Rehum is called בְּעֵל טְעֵם, *dominus consilii v. decreti*, by others *consiliarius*, royal counsellor, probably the title of the Persian civil governor (erroneously taken for a proper name in LXX., Syr., Arab.); Shimshai, סָפְרָא, the Hebrew סוֹפֵר, scribe, secretary. כְּנֶמָא is interpreted by Rashi and Aben Ezra by כַּאֲשֶׁר נֶאֱמַר, as we shall say; נֶמָא is in the Talmud frequently an abbreviation of נֶאֱמַר or נֵימַר, of like signification with לֵאמֹר: as follows. —Ver. 9. After this introduction we naturally look for the letter itself in ver. 9, instead of which we have (9 and 10) a full statement of who were the senders; and then, after a parenthetical interpolation, "This is the copy of the letter," etc., the letter itself in ver. 11. The statement is rather a clumsy one, the construction especially exhibiting a want of sequence. The verb to אֱדַיִן is wanting; this follows in ver. 11, but as an anacoluthon, after an enumeration of the names in 9 and 10 with שְׁלַחוּ. The sentence ought properly to run thus: "Then (*i.e.* in the days of Artachshasta) Rehum, etc., sent a letter to King Artachshasta, of which the following is a copy: Thy servants, the men on this side the river," etc. The names enumerated in vers. 9 and 10 were undoubtedly all inserted in the superscription or preamble of the letter, to give weight to the accusation brought against the Jews. The author of the Chaldee section of the narrative, however, has placed them first, and made the copy of the letter itself begin only with the words, "Thy servants," etc. First come the names of the superior officials, Rehum and Shimshai, and the rest of their companions. The latter are then separately enumerated: the Dinaites,

LXX. *Δειναῖοι*,—so named, according to the conjecture of Ewald (*Gesch.* iii. p. 676), from the Median city long afterwards called Deinaver (Abulf. *Géogr.* ed. Paris, p. 414); the Apharsathchites, probably the Pharathiakites of Strabo (xv. 3. 12) (*Παρητακηνοί*, Herod. i. 101), on the borders of Persia and Media, described as being, together with the Elymaites, a predatory people relying on their mountain fastnesses; the Tarpelites, whom Junius already connects with the *Τάπουροι* dwelling east of Elymais (Ptol. vi. 2. 6); the Apharsites, probably the Persians (פרסיא with א prosthetic); the Archevites, probably so called from the city אֶרֶךְ, Gen. x. 10, upon inscriptions Uruk, the modern Warka; the בַּבְלָיֵא, Babylonians, inhabitants of Babylon; the Shushanchites, *i.e.* the Susanites, inhabitants of the city of Susa; דֶּהָוֵא, in the Keri דֶּהָיֵא, the Dehavites, the Grecians (*Δάοι*, Herod. i. 125); and lastly, the Elamites, the people of Elam or Elymais. Full as this enumeration may seem, yet the motive being to name as many races as possible, the addition, "and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnapper brought over and set in the city of Samaria, and the rest that are on this side the river," etc., is made for the sake of enhancing the statement. Prominence being given both here and ver. 17 to the city of Samaria as the city in which Osnapper had settled the colonists here named, the "nations brought in by Osnapper" must be identical with those who, according to ver. 2, and 2 Kings xvii. 24, had been placed in the cities of Samaria by King Esarhaddon. Hence Osnapper would seem to be merely another name for Esarhaddon. But the names Osnapper (LXX. *Ἀσσεναφάρ*) and Asarhaddon (LXX. *Ἀσαραδάν*) being too different to be identified, and the notion that Osnapper was a second name of Asarhaddon having but little probability, together with the circumstance that Osnapper is not called king, as Asarhaddon is ver. 2, but only "the great and noble," it is more likely that he was some high functionary of Asarhaddon, who presided over the settlement of eastern races in Samaria and the lands west of the Euphrates. "In the cities," or at least the preposition בְּ, must be supplied from the preceding בְּקִרְיָה

before שְׁאָר עֵבֶר נַהֲרָה: and in the rest of the territory, or in the cities of the rest of the territory, on this side of Euphrates. עֵבֶר, *trans*, is to be understood of the countries west of Euphrates; matters being regarded from the point of view of the settlers, who had been transported from the territories east, to those west of Euphrates. וּכְעֶנֶת means "and so forth," and hints that the statement is not complete.

On comparing the names of the nations here mentioned with the names of the cities from which, according to 2 Kings xvii. 24, colonists were brought to Samaria, we find the inhabitants of most of the cities there named—Babylon, Cuthah, and Ava—here comprised under the name of the country as בַּבְלָיֵא, Babylonians; while the people of Hamath and Sepharvaim may fitly be included among "the rest of the nations," since certainly but few colonists would have been transported from the Syrian Hamath to Samaria. The main divergence between the two passages arises from the mention in our present verse, not only of the nations planted in the cities of Samaria, but of all the nations in the great region on this side of Euphrates (עֵבֶר נַהֲרָה). All these tribes had similar interests to defend in opposing the Jewish community, and they desired by united action to give greater force to their representation to the Persian monarch, and thus to hinder the people of Jerusalem from becoming powerful. And certainly they had some grounds for uneasiness lest the remnant of the Israelites in Palestine, and in other regions on this side the Euphrates, should combine with the Jerusalem community, and the thus united Israelites should become sufficiently powerful to oppose an effectual resistance to their heathen adversaries. On the anacoluthistic connection of ver. 11, see remarks above, p. 65. פַּרְשֶׁגֶן, vers. 11, 23, ch. v. 6, vii. 11, and frequently in the Targums and the Syriac, written פַּתְשֶׁגֶן Esth. iii. 14 and iv. 8, is derived from the Zendish *paiti* (Sanscr. *prati*) and *çenghana* (in Old-Persian *thanhana*), and signifies properly a counterword, *i.e.* counterpart, copy. The form with ר is either a corruption, or formed from a compound with *fra*; comp. Gildemeister in the *Zeitschr. für die Kunde des Morgenl.* iv. p. 210, and Haug in Ewald's

bibl. Jahrb. v. p. 163, etc.—The copy of the letter begins with עַבְדָּךְ, thy servants, the men, etc. The Chethib עבריך is the original form, shortened in the Keri into עַבְדָּךְ. Both forms occur elsewhere; comp. Dan. ii. 29, iii. 12, and other passages. The וכענת, etc., here stands for the full enumeration of the writers already given in ver. 9, and also for the customary form of salutation.—Vers. 12–16. The letter. Ver. 12. "Be it known unto the king." On the form לְהֱוֵא for יְהֱוֵא, peculiar to biblical Chaldee, see remarks on Dan. ii. 20. "Which are come up from thee," *i.e.* from the territory where thou art tarrying; in other words, from the country beyond Euphrates. This by no means leads to the inference, as Schrader supposes, that these Jews had been transported from Babylon to Jerusalem by King Artachshasta. סְלֵק answers to the Hebrew עָלָה, and is used like this of the journey to Jerusalem. "Are come to us, to Jerusalem." עֲלֵינָא, to us, that is, into the parts where we dwell, is more precisely defined by the words "to Jerusalem." "They are building the rebellious and bad city, and are setting up its walls and digging its foundations." Instead of מָרְדְתָּא (with Kamets and Metheg under ר) the edition of J. H. Mich. has מָרַדְתָּא, answering to the *stat. abs.* מָרְדָא, ver. 15; on the other hand, the edition of Norzi and several codices read מָרְדְתָּא, the feminine of מָרוֹד. For בְּאוּשְׁתָּא Norzi has בְּאִישְׁתָּא, from בְּאִישׁ, a contraction of בְּאִישׁ. For שורי אשכללו must be read, according to the Keri, שׁוּרַיָּא שַׁכְלְלוּ. The *Shaphel* שַׁכְלֵל, from כְּלַל, means to complete, to finish. אֻשִּׁין, bases, foundations. יְחַיְטוּ may be the imperf. Aphel of חוּט, formed after the example of יְקִים for יָקִים, omitting the reduplication, יְחִיט. חוּט means to sew, to sew together, and may, like רָפָא, be understood of repairing walls or foundations. But it is more likely to be the imperf. Aphel of חטט, in Syriac ܚܛܛ, and in the Talmud, to dig, to dig out, *fodit, excavavit*—to dig out the foundations for the purpose of erecting new buildings.—Ver. 13. "Now be it known unto the king, that if this city be built up and . . . they will not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and it (the city) will at last bring damage to the king." The three

words מִנְדָּה בְלוֹ וְהַלָךְ occur again, ver. 20 and vii. 24, in this combination as designating the different kinds of imposts. מִנְדָּה, with resolved *Dagesh forte*, for מִדָּה (ver. 20), signifies measure, then tax or custom measured to every one. בְּלוֹ, probably a duty on consumption, excise; הַלָךְ, a toll paid upon roads by travellers and their goods. The word אַפְתֹם, which occurs only here, and has not been expressed by old translators, depends upon the Pehlevi word אודום: it is connected with the Sanscrit *apa*, in the superl. *apama*, and signifies at last, or in the future; comp. Haug, p. 156. מַלְכִים, a Hebraized form for מַלְכִין, ver. 15, is perhaps only an error of transcription.—Ver. 14. "Now, because we eat the salt of the palace, and it does not become us to see the damage of the king, we send (this letter) and make known to the king." מְלַח מְלָח, to salt salt = to eat salt. To eat the salt of the palace is a figurative expression for: to be in the king's pay. See this interpretation vindicated from the Syriac and Persian in Gesen. *thes.* p. 790.[1] עַרְוָה, deprivation, emptying, here injury to the royal power or revenue. אָרִיךְ, participle of אָרַךְ, answering to the Hebrew עָרַךְ, means fitting, becoming. —Ver. 15. "That search may be made in the book of the chronicles of thy fathers, so shalt thou find in the book of the Chronicles that this city has been a rebellious city, and hurtful to kings and countries, and that they have from of old stirred up sedition within it, on which account this city was (also) destroyed." יְבַקַּר is used impersonally: let one seek, let search be made. סִפַּר דָּכְרָנָיָא, book of records, is the public royal chronicle in which the chief events of the history of the realm were recorded, called Esth. vi. 1 the book of the records of daily events. *Thy* fathers are the predecessors of the king, *i.e.* his predecessors in government; therefore not merely the Median and Persian, but the Chaldean and Assyrian kings, to whose dominions the Persian monarchs had succeeded. אֶשְׁתַּדּוּר, a verbal noun from the

[1] Luther, in translating "all we who destroyed the temple," follows the Rabbis, who, from the custom of scattering salt upon destroyed places, Judg. ix. 45, understood these words as an expression figurative of destruction, and הֵיכְלָא as the temple.

Ithpeal of שְׁרַר, rebellion. מִן יוֹמָת עָלְמָא, from the days of eternity, *i.e.* from time immemorial. יוֹמָת is in the constructive state, plural, formed from the singular יוֹמָא. This form occurs only here and ver. 19, but is analogous with the Hebrew poetical form יְמוֹת for יָמִים.—Ver. 16. After thus casting suspicion upon the Jews as a seditious people, their adversaries bring the accusation, already raised at the beginning of the letter, to a climax, by saying that if Jerusalem is rebuilt and fortified, the king will lose his supremacy over the lands on this side the river. לָקְבֵל דְּנָה, on this account, for this reason, that the present inhabitants of the fortified city Jerusalem are like its former inhabitants, thou wilt have no portion west of Euphrates, *i.e.* thou wilt have nothing more to do with the countries on this side the river—wilt forfeit thy sway over these districts.

Vers. 17–22. The royal answer to this letter. פִּתְגָמָא—a word which has also passed into the Hebrew, Eccles. viii. 11, Esth. i. 20—is the Zend. *patigama*, properly that which is to take place, the decree, the sentence; see on Dan. iii. 16. שְׁאָר עֲבַר נ׳ still depends upon בְּ: those dwelling in Samaria and the other towns on this side the river. The royal letter begins with שְׁלָם וּכְעֶת, "Peace," and so forth. כְּעֶת is abbreviated from כְּעִדָּנָה.—Ver. 18. "The letter which you sent to us has been plainly read before me." מְפָרָשׁ, part. pass. Pael, corresponds with the Hebrew part. Piel מְפֹרָשׁ, made plain, adverbially, plainly, and does not signify "translated into Persian."—Ver. 19. "And by me a command has been given, and search has been made; and it has been found that this city from of old hath lifted itself (risen) up against kings," etc. מִתְנַשְּׂא, lifted itself up rebelliously, as (in Hebrew) in 1 Kings i. 5.—Ver. 20. "There have been powerful kings in Jerusalem, and (rulers) exercising dominion over the whole region beyond the river" (westward of Euphrates). This applies in its full extent only to David and Solomon, and in a less degree to subsequent kings of Israel and Judah. On ver. 20*b*, comp. ver. 13.—Ver. 21. "Give ye now commandment to hinder these people (to keep them from the work), that this city be not built until

command (*sc.* to build) be given from me." יִתְּשָׂם, Ithpeal of שׂוּם.—Ver. 22. "And be warned from committing an oversight in this respect," *i.e.* take heed to overlook nothing in this matter (וְהִיר, instructed, warned). "Why should the damage become great (*i.e.* grow), to bring injury to kings?" —Ver. 23. The result of this royal command. As soon as the copy of the letter was read before Rehum and his associates, they went up in haste to Jerusalem to the Jews, and hindered them by violence and force. אֶדְרָע with א prosthetic only here, elsewhere דְּרָע (=זְרוֹעַ), arm, violence. Bertheau translates, "with forces and a host;" but the rendering of אֶדְרָע or זְרוֹעַ by "force" can neither be shown to be correct from Ezek. xvii. 9 and Dan. xi. 15, 31, nor justified by the translation of the LXX., *ἐν ἵπποις καὶ δυνάμει.*

Ver. 24. "Then ceased the work of the house of God at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of Darius king of Persia." With this statement the narrator returns to the notice in ver. 5, that the adversaries of Judah succeeded in delaying the building of the temple till the reign of King Darius, which he takes up, and now adds the more precise information that it ceased till the *second year* of King Darius. The intervening section, vers. 6–23, gives a more detailed account of those accusations against the Jews made by their adversaries to kings Ahashverosh and Artachshasta. If we read vers. 23 and 24 as successive, we get an impression that the discontinuation to build mentioned in ver. 24 was the effect and consequence of the prohibition obtained from King Artachshasta, through the complaints brought against the Jews by his officials on this side the river; the בַּאדַיִן of ver. 24 seeming to refer to the אֱדַיִן of ver. 23. Under this impression, older expositors have without hesitation referred the contents of vers. 6–23 to the interruption to the building of the temple during the period from Cyrus to Darius, and understood the two names Ahashverosh and Artachshasta as belonging to Cambyses and (Pseudo) Smerdis, the monarchs who reigned between Cyrus and Darius. Grave objections to this view have, however, been raised by Kleinert (in the *Beiträgen der Dorpater Prof. d.*

Theol. 1832, vol. i.) and J. W. Schultz (*Cyrus der Grosse*, in *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* 1853, p. 624, etc.), who have sought to prove that none but the Persian kings Xerxes and Artaxerxes can be meant by Ahashverosh and Artachshasta, and that the section vers. 6–23 relates not to the building of the temple, but to the building of the walls of Jerusalem, and forms an interpolation or episode, in which the historian makes the efforts of the adversaries of Judah to prevent the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem under Xerxes and Artaxerxes follow immediately after his statement of their attempt to hinder the building of the temple, for the sake of presenting at one glance a view of all their machinations against the Jews. This view has been advocated not only by Vaihinger, "On the Elucidation of the History of Israel after the Captivity," in the *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* 1857, p. 87, etc., and Bertheau in his Commentary on this passage, but also by Hengstenberg, *Christol.* iii. p. 143, Auberlen, and others, and opposed by Ewald in the 2d edition of his *Gesch. Israels*, iv. p. 118, where he embraces the older explanation of these verses, and A. Koehler on Haggai, p. 20. On reviewing the arguments advanced in favour of the more modern view, we can lay no weight at all upon the circumstance that in 6–23 the building of the temple is not spoken of. The contents of the letter sent to Ahashverosh (ver. 6) are not stated; in that to Artachshasta (vers. 11–16) the writers certainly accuse the Jews of building the rebellious and bad city (Jerusalem), of setting up its walls and digging out its foundations (ver. 12); but the whole document is so evidently the result of ardent hatred and malevolent suspicion, that well-founded objections to the truthfulness of these accusations may reasonably be entertained. Such adversaries might, for the sake of more surely attaining their end of obstructing the work of the Jews, easily represent the act of laying the foundations and building the walls of the temple as a rebuilding of the town walls. The answer of the king, too (vers. 17-22), would naturally treat only of such matters as the accusers had mentioned. The argument derived from the names of the kings is of far more importance.

The name אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ (in ver. 6) occurs also in the book of Esther, where, as is now universally acknowledged, the Persian king Xerxes is meant; and in Dan. ix. 1, as the name of the Median king Kyaxares. In the cuneiform inscriptions the name is in Old-Persian *Ksayarsa*, in Assyrian *Hiśiarsi*, in which it is easy to recognise both the Hebrew form Ahashverosh, and the Greek forms Ξέρξης and Κυαξάρης. On the other hand, the name Cambyses (Old-Persian *Kambudshja*) offers no single point of identity; the words are radically different, whilst nothing is known of Cambyses having ever borne a second name or surname similar in sound to the Hebrew Ahashverosh. The name Artachshasta, moreover, both in Esth. vii. and viii., and in the book of Nehemiah, undoubtedly denotes the monarch known as *Artaxerxes* (*Longimanus*). It is, indeed, in both these books written אַרְתַּחְשַׁסְתְּא with ס, and in the present section, and in vi. 14, אַרְתַּחְשַׁשְׂתְּא; but this slight difference of orthography is no argument for difference of person, ארתחשׁשתא seeming to be a mode of spelling the word peculiar to the author of the Chaldee section, Ezra iv.–vi. Two other names, indeed, of Smerdis, the successor of *Cambyses*, have been handed down to us. According to Xenophon, *Cyrop.* viii. 7, and Ktesias, *Pers. fr.* 8–13, he is said to have been called *Tanyoxares*, and according to *Justini hist.* i. 9, *Oropastes;* and Ewald is of opinion that the latter name is properly Ortosastes, which might answer to Artachshasta. It is also not improbable that Smerdis may, as king, have assumed the name of Artachshasta, Ἀρταξέρξης, which Herodotus (vi. 98) explains by μέγας ἀρήϊος. But neither this possibility, nor the opinion of Ewald, that Ortosastes is the correct reading for Oropastes in *Just. hist.* i. 9, can lay any claim to probability, unless other grounds also exist for the identification of Artachshasta with Smerdis. Such grounds, however, are wanting; while, on the other hand, it is *à priori* improbable that Ps. Smerdis, who reigned but about seven months, should in this short period have pronounced such a decision concerning the matter of building the temple of Jerusalem, as we read in the letter of Artachshasta, 17–22, even if the adversaries of the Jews

should, though residing in Palestine, have laid their complaints before him, immediately after his accession to the throne. When we consider also the great improbability of Ahashverosh being a surname of Cambyses, we feel constrained to embrace the view that the section 6–23 is an episode inserted by the historian, on the occasion of narrating the interruption to the building of the temple, brought about by the enemies of the Jews, and for the sake of giving a short and comprehensive view of all the hostile acts against the Jewish community on the part of the Samaritans and surrounding nations.

The contents and position of ver. 24 may easily be reconciled with this view, which also refutes as unfounded the assertion of Herzfeld, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, i. p. 303, and Schrader, p. 469, that the author of the book of Ezra himself erroneously refers the document given, vers. 6–23, to the erection of the temple, instead of to the subsequent building of the walls of Jerusalem. For, to say nothing of the contents of vers. 6–23, although it may seem natural to refer the בֵּאדַיִן of ver. 24 to ver. 23, it cannot be affirmed that this reference is either necessary or the only one allowable. The assertion that בֵּאדַיִן is "*always* connected with that which *immediately* precedes," cannot be strengthened by an appeal to v. 2, vi. 1, Dan. ii. 14, 46, iii. 3, and other passages. בֵּאדַיִן, *then* (= at that time), in contradistinction to אֱדַיִן, *thereupon*, only refers a narrative, in a general manner, to the time spoken of in that which precedes it. When, then, it is said, *then*, or at that time, the work of the house of God ceased (ver. 24), the then can only refer to what was before related concerning the building of the house of God, *i.e.* to the narrative vers. 1–5. This reference of ver. 24 to vers. 1–5 is raised above all doubt, by the fact that the contents of ver. 24 are but a recapitulation of ver. 5; it being said in both, that the cessation from building the temple lasted till the reign, or, as it is more precisely stated in ver. 24, till the second year of the reign, of Darius king of Persia. With this recapitulation of the contents of ver. 5, the narrative, ver. 24, returns to the point which it had

reached at ver. 5. What lies between is thereby characterized as an illustrative episode, the relation of which to that which precedes and follows it, is to be perceived and determined solely by its contents. If, then, in this episode, we find not only that the building of the temple is not spoken of, but that letters are given addressed to the Kings Ahashverosh and Artachshasta, who, as all Ezra's contemporaries would know, reigned not before but after Darius, the very introduction of the first letter with the words, "*And* in the reign of Ahashverosh" (ver. 6), after the preceding statement, "until the reign of Darius king of Persia" (ver. 5), would be sufficient to obviate the misconception that letters addressed to Ahashverosh and Artachshasta related to matters which happened in the period between Cyrus and Darius Hystaspis. Concerning another objection to this view of vers. 6–23, viz. that it would be strange that King Artaxerxes, who is described to us in Ezra vii. and in Nehemiah as very favourable to the Jews, should have been for a time so prejudiced against them as to forbid the building of the town and walls of Jerusalem, we shall have an opportunity of speaking in our explanations of Neh. i.—Ver. 24, so far, then, as its matter is concerned, belongs to the following chapter, to which it forms an introduction.

CHAP. V.—THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE CONTINUED, AND NOTICE THEREOF SENT TO KING DARIUS.

In the second year of Darius Hystaspis (Darajavus Viçtaçpa) the prophets Zechariah and Haggai arose, and exhorted the people by words, both of reproof and encouragement, to assist in the work of rebuilding the house of God. In consequence of these prophetic admonitions, the rulers of the community resumed the work (vers. 1, 2); and the royal governor on this side the Euphrates allowed them, when in answer to his inquiries they appealed to the decree of Cyrus, to proceed with their building until the arrival of

a decision from King Darius, to whom he addressed a written report of the matter (3–17).

Vers. 1 and 2. "The prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel upon them." הִתְנַבִּי without א, which this word occasionally loses in Hebrew also, comp. 1 Sam. x. 6, 13, Jer. xxvi. 9. The epithet נְבִיאָה added to the name of Haggai serves to distinguish him from others of the same name, and as well as הַנָּבִיא, Hagg. i. 1, 3, 12, and elsewhere, is used instead of the name of his father; hence, after Zechariah is named, the prophets, as designating the position of both, can follow. עַל־יְהוּדָיֵא, they prophesied to (not against) the Jews; עַל as in Ezek. xxxvii. 4, = אֶל, Ezek. xxxvii. 9, xxxvi. 1. The Jews *in Judah and Jerusalem*, in contradistinction to Jews dwelling elsewhere, especially to those who had remained in Babylon. עֲלֵיהוֹן belongs to בְּשֵׁם אֱלָהּ, in the name of God, who was upon them, who was come upon them, had manifested Himself to them. Comp. Jer. xv. 16.—Ver. 2. "Then rose up Zerubbabel . . . and Joshua . . . and began to build the house of God at Jerusalem, and with them the prophets of God helping them." The beginning to build is (iii. 6, etc.) the commencement of the building properly so called, upon the foundations laid, iii. 10; for what was done after this foundation-laying till a stop was put to the work, was so unimportant that no further notice is taken of it. The "prophets of God" are those mentioned ver. 1, viz. Haggai, and Zechariah the son, *i.e.* grandson, of Iddo, for his father's name was Berechiah (see Introd. to Zechariah). Haggai entered upon his work on the first day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius; and his first address made such an impression, that Zerubbabel and Joshua with the people set about the intermitted work of building as early as the twenty-fourth day of the same month (comp. Hagg. i. 1 and 14 sq.). Two months later, viz. in the eighth month of the same year, Zechariah began to exhort the people to turn sincerely to the Lord their God, and not to relapse into the sins of their fathers.

Vers. 3–5. When the building was recommenced, the governor on this side Euphrates, and other royal officials, evidently informed of the undertaking by the adversaries of the Jews, made their appearance for the purpose of investigating matters on the spot. אֲתָה עֲלֵיהוֹן, came to them, to the two above-named rulers of the community at Jerusalem. Tatnai (LXX. *Θαυθαναΐ*) was פֶּחָה, viceroy, in the provinces west of Euphrates, *i.e.*, as correctly expanded in 1 Esdras, of Syria and Phœnicia, to which Judæa with its *Pecha* Zerubbabel was subordinate. With him came Shethar-Boznai, perhaps his secretary, and their companions, their subordinates. The royal officials inquired: "Who has commanded you to build this house, and to finish this wall?" The form לְבֻנָא here and ver. 13 is remarkable, the infinitive in Chaldee being not בְּנָא, but מִבְנָא; compare vers. 2, 17, and vi. 8. Norzi has both times לְבֻנָא, as though the Dagesh *forte* were compensating for an omitted מ. אֲשַׁרְנָא, which occurs only here and ver. 9, is variously explained. The Vulgate, the Syriac, and also the Rabbins, translate: these walls. This meaning best answers to the context, and is also linguistically the most correct. It can hardly, however, be derived (Gesenius) from אָשַׁר, but rather from אָשַׁן, in Chaldee אָשַׁן, firm, strong—walls as the strength or firmness of the building. The form אֲשַׁרְנָא has arisen from אֲשַׁנָא, and is analogous to the form בְּשַׁנָה.[1]—Ver. 4. Then told we them after this manner (כְּנֶמְא, iv. 8), what were the names of the men who were building this building. From אֲמַרְנָא, *we* said, it is obvious that the author of this account was an eye-witness of, and sharer in, the work of building. There is not a shadow of reason for altering אֲמַרְנָא into אֲמַרוּ, or into the participle אָמְרִין (Ew., Berth., and others); the *εἴποσαν* of the LXX. being no critical authority for so doing. The answer in ver. 4 seems not to correspond with

[1] The interpretations of the LXX., *τὴν χορηγίαν ταύτην*, meaning these building materials, and of 1 Esdr. vi. 4, *τὴν στέγην ταύτην καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα*, this roof and all besides, for which Bertheau decides, without considering that שַׁכְלֵל may mean to complete, and not to prepare for anything, are but conjectures.

the question in ver. 3. The royal officials asked, Who had commanded them to build? The Jews told them the names of those who had undertaken and were conducting the building. But this incongruity between question and answer is merely caused by the fact that the discussion is reported only by a short extract restricted to the principal subjects. We learn that this is the case from the contents of the letter sent by the officials to the king. According to these, the royal functionary inquired not merely concerning the author of the command to build, but asked also the names of those who were undertaking the work (comp. vers. 9 and 10); while the rulers of the Jews gave a circumstantial answer to both questions (vers. 11–15).—Ver. 5. Tatnai and Shethar-Boznai had power to prohibit them from proceeding; they allowed them, however, to go on with their work till the arrival of an answer from the king, to whom they had furnished a written report of the matter. In these dealings, the historian sees a proof of the divine protection which was watching over the building. "The eye of their God was over the elders of the Jews, that they should not restrain them (from building) till the matter came to Darius; and they should then receive a letter concerning this matter." Bertheau incorrectly translates עַד־טַעְמָא לְדָרְיָוֶשׁ: until the command of King Darius should arrive. לְ is only used as a paraphrase of the genitive in statements of time; otherwise the genitive, if not expressed by the *status construc.*, is designated by דְ or דִי. יְהָךְ, fut. Peal of הֲלַךְ, formed by the rejection of ל, construed with לְ, signifies to go to a place (comp. vii. 13), or to come to a person. טַעְמָא (טְעַם) does not here mean commandment, but the matter, *causa*, which the king is to decide; just as פִּתְגָם, vi. 11, means thing, *res*. The clause וְאֵדִין יְתִיבוּן still depends upon עַד: and till they (the royal officials) then receive a letter, *i.e.* obtain a decision.

In vers. 6–17 follows the letter which the royal officials sent to the king. Vers. 6 and 7*a* form the introduction to this document, and correspond with vers. 8–11 in chap. iv. Copy of the letter (comp. iv. 11) which Tatnai, etc., sent.

The senders of the letter are, besides Ṭatnai, Shethar-Boznai and his companions the Apharsachites, the same called iv. 9 the Apharsathchites, who perhaps, as a race specially devoted to the Persian king, took a prominent position among the settlers in Syria, and may have formed the royal garrison. After this general announcement of the letter, follows the more precise statement: They sent the matter to him; and in it was written, To King Darius, much peace. פִּתְגָם here is not command, but matter; see above. כֹּלָּא, its totality, is unconnected with, yet dependent on, שְׁלָמָא: peace in all things, in every respect. The letter itself begins with a simple representation of the state of affairs (ver. 8): "We went into the province of Judæa, to the house of the great God (for so might Persian officials speak of the God of Israel, after what they had learned from the elders of Judah of the edict of Cyrus), and it is being built with freestone, and timber is laid in the walls; and this work is being diligently carried on, and is prospering under their hands." The placing of wood in the walls refers to building beams into the wall for flooring; for the building was not so far advanced as to make it possible that this should be said of covering the walls with wainscoting. The word אָסְפַּרְנָא here, and vi. 8, 12, 13, vii. 17, 21, 26, is of Aryan origin, and is explained by Haug in *Ew. Jahrb.* v. p. 154, from the Old-Persian *us-parna*, to mean: carefully or exactly finished,—a meaning which suits all these passages.—Ver. 9. Hereupon the royal officials asked the elders of the Jews who had commanded them to build, and inquired concerning their names, that they might write to the king the names of the leading men (see the remark on 3 and 4). דִּי בְרֵאשֵׁיהֹם does not mean, who are at the head of them; but, who act in the capacity of heads.—Ver. 11. The answer of the elders of the Jews. They returned us answer in the following manner (לְמֵמַר = לֵאמֹר): "We are His, the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house which was built many years ago; and a great king of Israel built and completed it." מִקַּדְמַת דְּנָה, of before this, *i.e.* before the present; to which is added the more precise de-

finition: many years (accusative of time), *i.e.* many years before the present time.—Ver. 12. For this reason (לָהֵן), because (מִן־דִּי = מֵאֲשֶׁר, *e.g.* Isa. xliii. 4) our fathers provoked the God of heaven, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, and he (Nebuch.) destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon. For כַּסְדָּיָא the Keri requires כַּסְדָּאָה, the ordinary form of the *absolute state* of the noun in *ai.* סְחַר, Pael, in the sense of destroy, appears only here in biblical Chaldee, but more frequently in the Targums. עַמָּה, its people, would refer to the town of Jerusalem; but Norzi and J. H. Mich. have עַמָּה, and the Masora expressly says that the word is to be written without Mappik, and is therefore the *stat. emphat.* for עַמָּא.—Vers. 13, 14. In the first year, however, of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus made a decree, etc.; comp. i. 3. The infin. לִבְנָא like ver. 3.—On vers. 14 and 15, comp. i. 7–11. וְיהִיבוּ, præter. pass. of Peal: they were given to one Sheshbazzar (is) his name, *i.e.* to one of the name of Sheshbazzar, whom he had made pechah. Zerubbabel is also called פֶּחָה, Hagg. i. 1, 14, and elsewhere.—Ver. 15. Take these vessels, go forth, place them in the temple. For אֱלָה the Keri reads אֵל, according to 1 Chron. xx. 8. אֲזַל is imperat. Aphel of נְזַל. The three imperatives succeed each other without any copula in this rapid form of expression. The last sentence, "and let the house of God be built in its place," *i.e.* be rebuilt in its former place, gives the reason for the command to deposit the vessels in the temple at Jerusalem, *i.e.* in the house of God, which is to be rebuilt in its former place.—Ver. 16. In virtue of this command of Cyrus, this Sheshbazzar came (from Babylon to Jerusalem), and laid then the foundations of the house of God, and from that time till now it has been building, and is not (yet) finished. שְׁלִים, part. pass. of שְׁלֵם, often used in the Targums and in Syriac for the Hebrew תָּמַם; hence in Dan. v. 26 the Aphel, in the meaning of to finish, and Ezek. vii. 19, to restore. This statement does not exclude the cessation from building from the last year of Cyrus to the second of Darius,

narrated iv. to v. 24, as Bertheau and others suppose, but only leaves the unmentioned circumstance which had been the cause of the delay. If the section iv. 6–23 does not refer to the building of the temple, then neither is a "forcible interruption" of the building spoken of in chap. iv.; but it is only said that the adversaries frustrated the purpose of the Jews to rebuild the temple till the time of Darius, and weakened the hands of the people, so that the work of the house of God ceased.—Ver. 17. After thus representing the state of affairs, the royal officials request Darius to cause a search to be made among the archives of the kingdom, as to whether a decree made by Cyrus for the erection of the temple at Jerusalem was to be found therein, and then to communicate to them his decision concerning the matter. "And if it seem good to the king, let search be made in the king's treasure-house there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king." הֵן טָב עַל, like the Hebrew אִם טוֹב עַל, Esth. i. 19, for which in older Hebrew טוֹב לְ, Deut. xxiii. 17, or טוֹב בְּעֵינַיִם, Gen. xix. 8, Judg. x. 15, and elsewhere, is used. בֵּית גְּנָזַיָּא, house of the treasure, more definitely called, vi. 1, house of the rolls, where also the royal treasures were deposited. Hence it is obvious that important documents and writings were preserved in the royal treasury. תַּפָּה, there, is explained by "which at Babylon." רְעוּת, chald. *voluntas*, comp. vii. 18. Concerning the behaviour of these officials Brentius well remarks: *vides differentiam inter calumniatores et bonos ac probos viros. Una eademque causa erat ædificii templi, unus idemque populus Judæorum; attamen hujus populi causa aliter refertur ab impiis calumniatoribus, aliter a bonis viris.*

CHAP. VI.—THE ROYAL DECREE, THE COMPLETION AND DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE, AND THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER.

Vers. 1–12. *The decision of Darius.*—Vers. 1–5. At the command of Darius, search was made in the archives of the

royal treasury; and in the fortress of Achmetha in Media, was found the roll in which was recorded the edict published by Cyrus, concerning the building of the temple at Jerusalem.—Ver. 1. Search was made in the house of the books where also the treasures were deposited in Babylon. מְהַתְּחִין, partic. Aphel of נְחַת; see v. 15.—Ver. 2. "And there was found at Achmetha, in the fortress that is in the land of Media, a roll; and thus was it recorded therein." In Babylon itself the document sought for was not found; though, probably, the search there made, led to the discovery of a statement that documents pertaining to the time of Cyrus were preserved in the fortress of Achmetha, where the record in question was subsequently discovered. אַחְמְתָא, the capital of Great Media—*τὰ Ἐκβάτανα*, Judith i. 1, 14, or *Ἀγβάτανα* (Herod. i. 98)—built by Dejokes, was the summer residence of the Persian and Parthian kings, and situate in the neighbourhood of the modern Hamadan. Achmetha is probably the Old-Median or Old-Persian pronunciation of the name, the letters אחמ on Sassanidian coins being explained as denoting this city (Mordtmann in the *Zeitschrift der deutsch morgenl. Gesellschaft*, viii. p. 14). The citadel of Ecbatana probably contained also the royal palace and the official buildings. For בְּנָוֵה is found in some MSS. and editions בְּנָוָה; but Norzi and J. H. Mich. have Pathach under ו as the better authorized reading. דִּכְרוֹנָה, *stat. emph.* of דִּכְרוֹן, *memorandum*, *ὑπόμνημα*, a record of anything memorable. The contents of this document follow, vers. 3–5. First, the proclamation of King Cyrus in the first year of his reign: "The house of God at Jerusalem, let this house be built as a place where sacrifices are offered." The meaning of the words following is doubtful. We translate וְאַשְׁוֹהִי מְסוֹבְלִין: and let them raise up its foundations, *i.e.* its foundations are to be again raised up, restored. אַשְׁיָן, foundations (iv. 12); מְסוֹבְלִין, part. Poel of סְבַל, to carry, to raise (not to be raised). סְבַל often stands for the Hebrew נָשָׂא, to carry, to raise up, to erect; compare the Samaritan translation of Gen. xiii. 10: וסבל את עינין, he lifted up his eyes. סוֹבֵל אֻשִּׁין is analogous with קוֹמֵם מוֹסְדֵי ד׳, Isa. lviii. 12, and signifies to erect buildings upon the foun-

dations.[1] Expositors are divided as to the dimensions of the new temple, "its height 60 cubits, and its breadth 60 cubits," which are so given also in LXX., *Esdr. gr.*, and Joseph. *Antiq.* xi. 4. 6; while Solomon's temple was but 30 cubits high, and, without the side-buildings, only 20 cubits broad. We nevertheless consider the statements correct, and the text incorrupt, and explain the absence of the measure of length simply by the fact that, as far as length was concerned, the old and new temples were of equal dimensions. Solomon's temple, measured externally, inclusive of the porch and the additional building at the hinder part, was about 100 cubits long (see the ground plan in my *bibl. Archaeol.* Table II. fig. 1). To correspond with this length, the new temple was, according to the desire of Cyrus, to be both higher and broader, viz. 60 cubits high, and as many wide,—measurements which certainly apply to external dimensions. Zerubbabel's temple, concerning the structure of which we have no further particulars, was externally of this height and breadth. This may be inferred from the speech of King Herod in Joseph. *Ant.* xv. 11. 1, in which this tyrant, who desired to be famous for the magnificence of his buildings, endeavoured to gain the favour of the people for the rebuilding of the temple, which he was contemplating, by the remark that the temple built by their forefathers, on their return from the Babylonian captivity, was 60 cubits too low,—Solomon's temple having been double that height (*sc.*, according to the height given in 2 Chron. iii. 4, 120 cubits),—and from the fact that Herod made his temple 100 or 120 cubits high. Hence the temple of Zerubbabel, measured externally, must have been 60 cubits high; and consequently we need not diminish the breadth of 60 cubits,

[1] The Vulgate, following a rabbinical explanation, has *ponant fundamenta supportantia*, which is here unsuitable. The conjecture of Bertheau, who labours, by all sorts of critical combinations of the letters in the words וְאַשְׁוֹתֵי מְסוּבָּלִין, to produce the text אשותי אמין מאה תמנין, "its foundation length 180 cubits," is as needless as it is mistaken. The interpretation of the words in the LXX., καὶ ἔθηκεν ἔπαρμα, and Pseudo-Ezra vi., διὰ πυρὸς ἐνδελεχους, are nothing else than unmeaning suppositions.

also given in this verse, by alterations of the text, because Herod's temple was likewise of this width, but must understand the given dimensions to relate to external height and breadth.[1] For in Herod's temple the holy places were but 60 cubits high and 20 wide; the holy place, 40 cubits long, 20 wide, and 60 high; the holy of holies, 20 cubits long, 20 wide, and 60 high. And we may assume that the dimensions of Zerubbabel's temple preserved the same proportions, with perhaps the modification, that the internal height did not amount to 60 cubits,—an upper storey being placed above the holy place and the holy of holies, as in Herod's temple; which would make the internal height of these places amount to only about 30 or 40 cubits.[1] In like manner must the 60 cubits of breadth be so divided, that the 5 cubits internal breadth of the side-buildings of Solomon's temple must be enlarged to 10, which, allowing 5 cubits of thickness for the walls, would make the entire building 60 cubits wide (5 + 10 + 5 + 20 + 5 + 10 + 5).[2] The statement in ver. 4, "three layers of great stones, and a layer of new timber," is obscure. נְדָבָה means row, layer, and stands in the Targums for the Hebrew טוּר, "used of a layer of bricks;" see Gesen. *Thes.* p. 311, and Levy, *chald.*

[1] While we acknowledge it possible that the holy and most holy places, measured within, may have been only 40 cubits high, we cannot admit the objection of H. Merz, in *Herzog's Realencycl.* xv. p. 513, that 20 cubits of internal breadth is an inconceivable proportion to 60 cubits, this being the actual proportion in Herod's temple, as Merz himself states, p. 516, without finding it in this instance "inconceivable."

[2] The conjecture of Merz in his above-cited article, and of Bertheau, that the dimensions of Zerubbabel's temple were double those of Solomon's,—viz. the holy and most holy places 40 cubits high and 40 wide, the upper chambers 20 cubits high, the side-chambers each 10 cubits high, and the whole building 120 cubits long,—must be rejected as erroneous, by the consideration that Herod's temple was only the length of Solomon's, viz. 100 cubits, of which the holy of holies took up 20, the holy place 40, the porch 10, the additional building behind 10, and the four walls 20. For Herod would by no means have diminished the length of his building 20, or properly 40 cubits. We also see, from the above-named dimensions, that the 60 cubits broad cannot be understood of internal breadth.

Wörterbuch, ii. p. 93. אֶבֶן גְּלָל, stone of rolling, one that is rolled and cannot be carried, *i.e.* a great building stone. חַדָּת, *novus*, as an epithet to אָע, is remarkable, it being self-evident that new wood is generally used for a new building. The LXX. translates εἰς, reading the word חֲדָה (ver. 3). This statement involuntarily recalls the notice, 1 Kings vi. 36, that Solomon built the inner court, שְׁלֹשָׁה טוּרֵי גָזִית וְטוּר כְּרֻתֹת אֲרָזִים; hence Merz expresses the supposition that "this is certainly a fragment, forming the conclusion of the whole design of the building, which, like that in 1 Kings vi. 36, ends with the porch and the walls of the fore-court." Thus much only is certain, that the words are not to be understood, as by Fritzsche on 1 Esdr. vi. 25, as stating that the temple walls were built of "three layers of large stones, upon which was one layer of beams," and therefore were not massive; such kind of building never being practised in the East in old times. "And let the expenses be given out of the king's house." This is more precisely stated in ver. 8 of the royal revenues on this side the river. נִפְקָא, the expense (from נְפַק, Aphel, to expend), therefore the cost of building.—Ver. 5. "And also let the vessels . . . be restored, and brought again to the temple at Jerusalem, to their place, and (thou) shalt place them in the house of God." On the matter of this verse, comp. i. 7 and v. 14. The sing. יְהַךְ (comp. v. 5) is distributive: it (each vessel) to its place. וְתַחַת (comp. אַחַת v. 15) cannot, according to the sense, be third pers. fem. (neutr.), but only second pers. imperf. Aphel: thou shalt place. None but Sheshbazzar can be addressed (v. 15), though he is not named in ver. 3. The historian is evidently not giving the contents of the document word for word, but only its essential matter; hence he infers the address to Sheshbazzar from the answer of the Jewish elders (v. 15). Perhaps it was also remarked in the document, that Coresh caused the sacred vessels to be delivered to Sheshbazzar (i. 8).

Vers. 6–12. Acting upon the discovered edict, Darius warned the governor and royal officials on this side the Euphrates, not to hinder the building of the house of God

at Jerusalem. On the contrary, they were to promote it by furnishing what was necessary for the work, and paying the expenses of the building out of the royal revenues to the elders of the Jews (vers. 6–8). They were also to provide for the worship of God in this temple such animals as the priests should require for sacrifice (vers. 9, 10), under pain of severe punishment for transgressing this command as also for any injury done to the temple (vers. 11, 12). This decree was undoubtedly communicated to the governor in the form of a written answer to his inquiries (ver. 13). Without, however, expressly stating this to be the case, as ver. 1 and iv. 17 would lead us to expect, the historian gives us in ver. 6 sq. the actual contents of the royal edict, and that in the form of a direct injunction to the governor and his associates on this side the river: "Now Tatnai, governor, . . . be ye far from thence." The suffix וּכְנָוָתְהוֹן, and *their* associates, is indeed unsuitable to the form of an address, of which Tatnai and Shethar-Boznai are the subjects; the narrator, however, in using it, had in mind the title or introduction of the royal letter. On its matter, comp. v. 6. רְחַק and רְחֵיק, to be far from, figuratively to keep from anything, *e.g.* from good, Ps. liii. 2. מִן־תַּמָּה, from thence, from Jerusalem; in other words, trouble yourselves no longer, as, according to v. 3, you have done about what is being done there.—Ver. 7. "Let the work of the house of God alone." שְׁבַק with an accusative, to leave anything, to let it go on without hindrance. "Let the Pechah of the Jews (Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel) and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in its place." The לְ to לְשֵׁבִי introduces a second subject with special emphasis: And as far as regards the elders of the Jews, *i.e.* the Pechah, and especially the elders.—Ver. 8. "And a decree is (hereby) made by me, what ye shall do to these elders of the Jews, *i.e.* how you shall behave towards them (עֲבַד עִם = עָשָׂה עִם, Gen. xxiv. 12 sq.), to build this house, *i.e.* that this house may be built: namely, (וְ expl.) of the royal moneys, of the custom (מִדָּה, see remarks on iv. 13) on this side the river, let expenses (the cost of building) be punctually given to these men, that there be no hindrance." דִּי־לָא לְבַטָּלָא,

that there be no cessation or leisure from work, *i.e.* that the work is not to be discontinued. On the construction of the לְבִלְתִּי with the following infinitive, comp. Dan. vi. 9. The Vulgate renders the sense correctly by *nè impediatur opus.* —Ver. 9. "And what is needful, both young bullocks and rams and lambs, for the burnt-offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the word of the priests at Jerusalem (*i.e.* as the priests shall require for the service of God), let it be given them day by day without fail." מָה is joined with the plur. fem. of the partic. חַשָּׁחָן, and is defined by the enumeration which follows. מְשַׁח, properly the anointing, then oil as the means of anointing. On לֶהֱוֵא and לֶהֱוֹן, see remarks on iv. 12. דִּי־לָא שָׁלוּ, that there be no failure.— Ver. 10. The end the king had in view in all this follows: "That they (the priests) may offer sacrifices well-pleasing to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and of his sons." נִיחוֹחִין (comp. Dan. ii. 46) are sacrifices agreeable to God, רֵיחַ נִיחוֹחַ (Lev. i. 9, 13, and elsewhere), *i.e.* sacrifices pleasing to God. Cyrus had commanded the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, because he acknowledged the God of Israel to be the God of heaven, who had given him the kingdoms of the earth (i. 2). Darius was treading in his footsteps by also owning the God of the Jews as the God of heaven, and desiring that the blessing of this God might rest upon himself and his dynasty. Such an acknowledgment it was possible for the Persian kings to make without a renunciation of their polytheism. They could honour Jahve as a mighty, nay, as the mightiest God of heaven, without being unfaithful to the gods of their fathers; while the Jews could also, in the interest of their own welfare, pray and offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD for the life of the king to whom God had caused them to be subject (comp. Jer. xxix. 7). Accordingly we find that in after times sacrifices were regularly offered for the king on appointed days: comp. 1 Macc. vii. 33, xii. 11; 2 Macc. iii. 35, xiii. 23; Joseph. *Antiq.* xii. 2. 5, and elsewhere.—Ver. 11. To inculcate obedience to his command, Darius threatens to punish its transgression with death:

"If any one alters this command, let a beam be torn from his house, and let him be fastened hanging thereon." To alter a command means to transgress or abolish it. אָע, a piece of wood, a beam. זְקִיף, raised on high, is in Syriac the usual word for crucified, and is to be so understood here. מְחָא, to strike, with עַל, strike upon, fasten to, nail to. This kind of capital punishment was customary among the Assyrians (Diod. Sic. ii. 1), the ancient Persians, and many other nations, but seems to have been executed in different manners among different people. Among the Assyrians it generally consisted in the impalement of the delinquent upon a sharp strong wooden post; comp. Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 355, and *Nineveh and its Remains*, p. 379, with the illustration fig. 58. According to Herod. iii. 159, Darius impaled as many as 3000 Babylonians after the capture of their city (*ἀνεσκολόπισε*). Crucifixion proper, however, *i.e.* nailing to a cross, also occurred among the Persians; it was, however, practised by nailing the body of the criminal to a cross after decapitation; see the passages from Herodotus in *Brissonii de regio Persarum princip.* l. ii. c. 215. "And let his house be made a dunghill." See remarks on Dan. ii. 5 and 2 Kings x. 27.—Ver. 12. Finally, Darius adds the threat: "The God who has caused His name to dwell there, destroy every king and (every) people that shall stretch forth the hand to alter (this command), to destroy this house of God at Jerusalem." The expression, "the God who has caused His name to dwell there," is indeed specifically Israelitish (comp. Deut. xii. 11, xiv. 23; Jer. vii. 12; Neh. i. 9), and therefore undoubtedly originated with the Jewish historian; but the matter itself, the wish that God Himself would destroy him who should injure His temple, recalls the close of the inscription of Bisitun, wherein the judgments of Ahuramazda are imprecated upon him who should dare to injure the image and inscription, and his blessing invoked upon him who should respect them (Berth.).

Vers. 13–18. *The execution of the royal decree, the completion of the building, and the dedication of the new temple.* —Ver. 13. Tatnai and his associates diligently executed the

commands of Darius. "Because Darius the king sent (*i.e.* despatched to them the letter, whose contents have just been given, 6–12), they speedily acted accordingly in the manner stated" (כְּנֶמְאָ).—Ver. 14. The elders of the Jews, moreover, built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai and Zachariah, who thereby effected the resumption of the work, and promised them success. בְּ is used of the rule by which, or manner in which anything is done. "They built and finished (the building) according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artachshasta, kings of Persia." The naming of Artachshasta presents some difficulty; for since it is impossible to conceive that a predecessor of Darius is intended by a name which follows the name of that monarch, none but Artaxerxes Longimanus can be meant, and he did not reign till long after the completion of the temple. Cleric. and J. H. Mich. explain the mention of his name by the consideration that Artaxerxes, by his edict (vii. 15, 21), contributed to the maintenance, though not to the building, of the temple.[1] It may in this instance be questionable whether the name אַרְתַחְשַׁשְׂתָּא was added by the author of the Chaldee section, or by Ezra when he introduced this into his book. We believe the latter to be the correct view, because the Chaldee section, to judge by the אֲמַרְנָא, v. 4, was composed by one who lived contemporaneously with the building of the temple, while from the date of the completion of the temple to the seventh year of Artaxerxes fifty-seven years elapsed.—Ver. 15. And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar (the twelfth month), which is the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. שֵׁיצִיא, according to the Keri שֵׁיצִי, with the א dropped, is the Shaphel

[1] "*Nam etsi*," remarks Calovius in J. H. Mich., *adnotatt. uber. ad h. l.*, "*non ad structuram templi conduxerit proprie edictum Artaxerxis, quæ Darii secundo anno incepta et sexto absoluta fuit, v.* 15 *ad ornamenta tamen et additamenta eam spectasse dubium non est: quæ ab ipso, ceu rege post Cyrum et Darium erga Judæos Persarum omnium benignissimo, profecta hic celebratur.*" Similarly but more briefly explained by Clericus.

of יְצָא, to bring a thing to an end, to finish it. The form שֵׁיצִיא is not a participle pass. formed from the Shaphel (Gesen.), for this would be מְשֵׁיצִיא, but a Hebraized passive form of the Shaphel in the meaning of the Targumistic Ishtaphal, like הֵיתְיִי, Dan. iii. 13, and הֵיתְיַת, Dan. vi. 18, with the active הַיְתִי, Dan. vi. 17. In the Targums שֵׁיצִי has mostly an active, and only in a few passages the intransitive meaning, to end, to be at the end; comp. Levy, *chald. Wörterbuch*, *s.v.*[1]—Vers. 16, 17. The sons of Israel, more exactly the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the sons of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy. עֲבַד חֲנֻכָּה = the Hebrew עָשָׂה חֲנֻכָּה, to celebrate the dedication (2 Chron. vii. 9). בְּחֶדְוָה, Hebrew בְּשִׂמְחָה; see Neh. viii. 10. They brought for the dedication a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs as burnt-offerings, and twelve he-goats for a sin-offering for *all* Israel, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, because the temple was intended for the entire covenant people, whose return to the Lord and to the land of their fathers, according to the predictions of the prophets, was hoped for (comp. *e.g.* Ezek. xxxvii. 15 sq., Jer. xxxi. 27 sq.), not, as older expositors thought, because certain families of the ten tribes, who had before settled in Judah, were also among those who returned (J. H. Mich. *ad h. l.*).—Ver. 18. At the same time, the priests and Levites were appointed, according to their classes and divisions, to the service of the temple, that they might henceforth fulfil their office, each class in its week (2 Chron. xxiii. 4; 2 Kings xi. 9). וְהַקִימוּ corresponds with the Hebrew וַיַּעֲמִידוּ, iii. 8, and elsewhere.

[1] Instead of the "*third* day," which the LXX. also has, in accordance with the Hebrew text, 1 Esdr. vii. 5 gives the three-and-twentieth day of the month Adar,—a statement which Bertheau arbitrarily insists upon regarding as the original reading, because "the view that the compiler altered the third into the twenty-third day, because it seemed to him more fitting to assume an eight days' celebration of the dedication (comp. 1 Kings viii. 60, 2 Chron. xxix. 18), and to fill up therewith also the eight last days of the year, is rather far-fetched." Such a view, however, would be entirely consistent with the whole spirit of 1 Esdras.

As Bertheau justly remarks, "The services of public worship, which after the completion of the temple were to be performed by the priests and Levites, according to ancient ordinance, are here spoken of." With these words the Chaldee section closes.

Vers. 19–22. *Celebration of the feast of the passover, and of the feast of unleavened bread*, in the year following the dedication, as an historical testimony to the fact that the worship of God with its festivals was regularly carried on in the new temple.—Ver. 19. The feast of the passover, on the fourteenth day of the first month, took place only a few weeks after the dedication of the temple. The reason given in ver. 20—for the priests and Levites had purified themselves without exception (כֻּלָּם אָחָד, like iii. 9); they were all clean, and they killed the passover for all the sons of the captivity (*i.e.* the laity who had returned from exile), and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves—has in this connection the meaning: Then the congregation celebrated the passover, and they were able to keep and to eat the passover, because the priests had purified themselves that they might be qualified for performing the office incumbent upon them of sprinkling the blood; and the Levites were also clean, that they might be able to kill the lambs for the whole congregation (comp. the remarks on 2 Chron. xxx. 17, etc., and xxxv. 11, 14). From the days of Josiah, it seems to have been customary for the Levites to take the place of the heads of families (Ex. xii. 6, etc.) in slaughtering the passover lambs for the whole community, both priesthood and laity: for the laity, that no person who was unclean might kill the paschal lamb; for the priests, that their labours might be lightened, the sprinkling of blood and the offering of sacrifices occupying them far into the night (2 Chron. xxxv. 11, 14, 15). And this custom was followed at this time also. The priests are called אֲחֵיהֶם, brethren of the Levites, as in 2 Chron. xxix. 34, xxxv. 15.—Ver. 21. Thus the sons of Israel who had returned from captivity, and all that had separated themselves unto them from the uncleanness of the heathen of

the country to seek Jahve the God of Israel, could eat the passover. עַמֵּי הָאֲרָצוֹת = גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ, x. 2, 11, are the heathen races dwelling in Palestine. The expression is not essentially different from עַמֵּי הָאֲרָצוֹת, ix. 1 sq., iii. 3, and is only distinguishable therefrom, inasmuch as the latter appellation includes not merely the heathen inhabitants of Palestine, but also the heathen of other lands, as the Moabites, Ammonites, Egyptians, etc. (ix. 1 sq.). Those who had separated themselves from the uncleanness of the heathen to them (the Jews) to seek Jahve, are not proselytes from heathenism (Aben Ezra, Rashi, Clericus, and others), but Israelites, who had till now lived in Palestine, and mingled with the heathen inhabitants of the land. They were descended from those Israelites whom the kings of Assyria and Babylon had not carried away from the realms of Israel and Judah, and who with respect to religion had combined heathenism and the worship of Jahve (2 Kings xvii. 32, etc.), and thus defiled themselves with heathen impurity, but who now, after the erection of the temple, joined themselves to the new community, for the purpose of worshipping with them the God of their fathers in His temple, according to the law of Moses. For, as Bertheau rightly remarks, "in the days of Ezra the princes of the new community complain that the laity, the priests, and Levites do not separate from the people of the lands (ix. 1); reference is made to the dangers which threaten the Israelites, because they dwell in the holy land among the unclean (ix. 10). To separate from the uncleanness of the nations means to renounce intermarriage and other connection with them, x. 2, 10. They are Israelites who are summoned, x. 11, to separate from the peoples of the land; the seed of Israel is, in Neh. ix. 2, separated from the sons of the stranger, and in Neh. x. 29 they who separate from them are evidently Israelites, for, when they bind themselves to walk according to the law of God, they are said to join their brethren, *i.e.* their fellow-countrymen." Hence in this passage also we cannot but regard those who separated themselves as Israelites, dissolving their connection

with the heathen for the sake of the God of Israel.—Ver. 22. Hereupon they kept the feast of unleavened bread for seven days with joy; for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned to them (*i.e.* had made them joyful by turning to them) the heart of the king of Assyria. With regard to the expression, comp. 2 Chron. xx. 27, Neh. xii. 43. The king of *Assur* is the Persian king Darius, who as ruler of the former realm of Assyria is thus designated. The turning of this king's heart to them consisted in this, that their hands were strengthened for the work of the house of God, *i.e.* that through the goodwill of the king they were enabled to complete the building of their temple, and to restore the worship of the God of Israel. On חִזֵּק יְדֵיהֶם בְּ, comp. 1 Sam. xxiii. 19.

II.—THE RETURN OF EZRA THE SCRIBE FROM BABYLON TO JERUSALEM, AND HIS ENTRY UPON HIS OFFICIAL DUTIES THERE.—CHAP. VII.–X.

In the seventh year of the reign of King Artaxerxes Longimanus, Ezra the priest and scribe returned with certain priests, Levites, and other Israelites from Babylon to Jerusalem, furnished with a royal commission to provide for the worship of God, and the observance of the law, according to the ordinance of God, by the community, chap. vii. and viii. This mission he began to execute by sending away such heathen women as were married to Israelites.

CHAP. VII.—EZRA'S RETURN AND COMMISSION.

Vers. 1–10 form the introduction to the narrative which follows of Ezra's return to Jerusalem and his ministry there, and speak in general terms of himself and his arrival at Jerusalem with a band of exiles. They are followed, vers. 11–26, by a copy of the royal commission, and a thanks-

giving, vers. 27, 28, on the part of Ezra, for the mercy of God bestowed upon him.

Vers. 1-6. What follows is slightly combined with the former occurrences by the formula "after these things," without any more exact chronological definition; comp. Gen. xv. 1, xxii. 1, and elsewhere. Between the dedication of the temple in the sixth year of Darius and the arrival of Ezra in Jerusalem, a period of fifty-seven years had elapsed. "In the reign of Artachshasta king of Persia, went up Ezra," etc. The verb of the subject עֶזְרָא does not follow till ver. 6, where, after the interposition of the long genealogy, vers. 1-5, the distant subject is again taken up in הוּא עֶזְרָא. It is all but universally agreed that Artaxerxes Longimanus is intended by אַרְתַּחְשַׁסְתְּא; the explanation of this appellation as Xerxes in Joseph. *Antiq.* xi. 5. 1, for which Fritzsche (on 1 Esdr. viii. 1) has recently decided, being a mere conjecture on the part of that not very critical historian. The fact that the Artachshasta of the book of Nehemiah (i. 1, v. 14, xiii. 6) can be no other than Artaxerxes, is decisive of this point: for in Neh. xiii. 6 the thirty-second year of Artachshasta is mentioned; while according to Neh. viii. 9, xii. 26, 36, Ezra and Nehemiah jointly exercised their respective offices at Jerusalem.[1] Ezra is called Ben Seraiah, whose pedigree is traced to Eleazar the son of Aaron; Seraiah the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, was the father of Josedec the high priest carried into captivity (1 Chron. v. 40, etc.), and was himself the high priest whom Nebuchadnezzar slew at Riblah (2 Kings xxv. 18-21). Between the execution of Seraiah in the year 588 and the return of Ezra from Babylon in 458 B.C., there is a period of 130 years. Hence Ezra could have been neither the son nor grandson of Seraiah, but only his great or great-great-grandson. When we consider that Joshua, or Jeshua (ii. 2), the high priest who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel, was the grandson of Seraiah, we cannot but

[1] Very superficial are the arguments, and indeed the whole pamphlet, *Etude Chronologique des livres d'Esdras et de Néhémie*, Paris 1868, p. 40, etc., by which F. de Saulcy tries to show that the Artachshasta of Ezra vii. and of Nehemiah is Artaxerxes II. (Mnemon).

regard Ezra, who returned thence 78 years later, as a great-great-grandson of Seraiah. Moreover, we are justified in inferring from the fact that Ezra is not, like Joshua, designated as Ben Josedech, that he did not descend from *that* line of Seraiah in which the high-priestly dignity was hereditary, but from a younger son, and hence that his immediate ancestors were not (though his forefathers from Seraiah upwards were) of high-priestly descent. Hence the names of Ezra's ancestors from Seraiah up to Aaron (vers. 1–5) agree also with the genealogy of the high-priestly race (1 Chron. v. 30–40), with the *one* deviation that in ver. 3, between Azariah and Meraioth, six members are passed over, as is frequently the case in the longer genealogies, for the sake of shortening the list of names.—In ver. 6 Ezra, for the sake of at once alluding to the nature of his office, is designated סוֹפֵר מָהִיר בת', a scribe skilful in the law of Moses. The word סוֹפֵר means in older works writer or secretary; but even so early as Jer. viii. 8 the lying pen of the סֹפְרִים is spoken of, and here therefore סוֹפֵר has already attained the meaning of one learned in the Scripture, one who has made the written law a subject of investigation. Ezra is, however, the first of whom the predicate הַסּוֹפֵר, ὁ γραμματεύς, is used as a title. He is so called also in the letter of Artaxerxes (ver. 11), because he is said (ver. 9) to have applied his heart to seek out and to do the law of the LORD, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgment, *i.e.* because he had made the investigation of the law, for the sake of introducing the practice of the same among the congregation, his life-task; and the king granted him all his desire, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. The peculiar expression כְּיַד יהוה אֱלֹהָיו עָלָיו, which is found only here and in vers 9, 28, viii. 18, Neh. ii. 8, 18, and in a slightly altered guise in Ezra viii. 22, 31, "according to the good hand of his God, which was over him," means: according to the divine favour or divine care arranging for him; for the hand of God is הַטּוֹבָה, the good (ver. 9, and viii. 18), or לְטוֹבָה, viii. 22. בַּקָּשָׁה, the desire, request, demand, occurs only here and in the book of Esther. —Ver. 7. With Ezra went up a number of Israelites, priests,

and Levites. מִן partitive: a part of the whole. That they went up with Ezra appears from the context, and is expressly stated both in the royal edict (ver. 13) and in the further description of the expedition (ver. 28, viii. 1). They went up in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, and reached Jerusalem in the fifth month of that year.—In ver. 8 Ezra is again, as in ver. 6, the subject of the sentence; the intervening seventh verse being really only in apposition with ver. 6.—In ver. 9 the *time* occupied by the journey is more precisely defined; כִּי is explanatory. Namely, on the first day of the first month, he had appointed the journey from Babylon, etc. The Keri הוּא יְסָד can only mean, *ipsum erat fundamentum profectionis*, as J. H. Mich. after R. Sal. explains it, for יְסָד is pointed as the construct state. The departure of the expedition from the place of meeting occurred, according to viii. 31, on the twelfth day of the first month. Since, however, they encamped three days there, making the final preparations for their journey, eleven days might easily elapse between the period when the whole caravan had assembled, and the day of actual departure. The Keri offers no appropriate signification; for since הוּא can only be taken for the subject, and יְסָד הַמ׳ for the predicate, the sentence would contain an anacoluthon. To translate הוּא by *ipsum* cannot be justified by the usages of the language, for there is no such emphasis on יְסָד as to cause הוּא to be regarded as an emphatic reference to the following noun. יסד must be pointed יָסַד or יִסֵּד, as the third pers. perf. Kal or Piel, meaning to arrange, to appoint, and הוּא referred to Ezra. On כְּיַד אֱלֹהָיו הַטּוֹבָה, comp. ver. 6. The hand of his God graciously arranged for him, for he had prepared his heart to seek and to do the law of Jahve, *i.e.* to make the law of God his rule of action. לְהֹרֹת, like 2 Chron. xii. 14, xix. 3, xxx. 19. To teach in Israel statutes and judgments, as both are prescribed in the law of God.

Vers. 11–28. *The commission given by Artachshasta to Ezra* (vers. 11–26), *with a short postscript by Ezra* (vers. 27 and 28).—Ver. 11. The introductory title, "This is the copy of the letter." On פַּרְשֶׁגֶן, comp. iv. 11, and on נִשְׁתְּוָן,

iv. 7. Ezra is here, as also in the letter itself, vers. 12, 21, and in Neh. viii. 9, xii. 26, called only הַכֹּהֵן הַסּוֹפֵר, the priest, the scribe; in other places we find merely one title or the other: either the priest, x. 10, 16, Neh. viii. 2; or the scribe, Neh. viii. 4, 13, xii. 36. To designate him according to his rank, as the priest, seems to have subsequently become more customary; hence in the first book of Esdras he is constantly called ὁ Ἱερεύς. הַסּוֹפֵר is explained by the addition סֹפֵר דִּבְרֵי וגו׳, scribe of the words of the law of Jahve and of His statutes to Israel, *i.e.* the scribe, whose investigations referred to the law of God. More briefly in vers. 12 and 21: scribe of the law.—Ver. 12, etc. The letter containing the royal commission is given in the Chaldee original. It is questionable what explanation must be given to גְּמִיר in the title. If it were the adjective belonging to סָפַר דָּתָא, we should expect the emphatic state גְּמִירָא. Hence Bertheau combines it with the following וּכְעֶנֶת as an abbreviation, "completeness, etc.," which would signify that in the royal commission itself this introductory formula would be found fully given, and that all the words here missing are represented by וּכְעֶנֶת. This would be, at all events, an extremely strange expression. We incline to regard גְּמִיר as an adverb used adjectively: To the scribe in the law of God perfectly, for the perfect scribe, etc., corresponding with the translation of the Vulgate, *doctissimo*. The commission begins with an order that those Israelites who desire to go to Jerusalem should depart with Ezra, because the king and his seven counsellors send him to order matters in Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of God, and to carry thither presents and free-will offerings as a contribution towards the sacrifices, and other matters necessary for the worship of God, vers. 13–19. "By me is commandment given," as in vi. 8. לְמֵהָךְ . . . כָּל־מִתְנַדֵּב: Every one of the people of Israel in my kingdom, who shows himself willing to go up to Jerusalem, let him go up with thee. On יְהָךְ and the infin. מְהָךְ, comp. v. 5.—Ver. 14. "Forasmuch as thou (art) sent by the king and his seven counsellors to inquire (to institute an inquiry) concerning Judah and Jerusalem, accord-

ing to the law of thy God, which is in thy hand," *i.e.* which thou handlest or possessest and understandest. The seven counsellors of the king formed the supreme court of the realm; see remarks on Esth. i. 14. It is obvious from the context that שְׁלִיחַ must be completed by אַנְתְּ, for it is evidently Ezra who is addressed both in what precedes and follows. בַּקָּרָה עַל, to inquire concerning (the condition of) Judah, *i.e.* concerning the religious and civil relations of the Jewish community, to arrange them in conformity with the divine law.—Ver. 15, etc. "To carry the silver and gold which the king and his counsellors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose habitation is at Jerusalem, and all the silver and gold which thou shalt obtain in all the province of Babylon, with the free-will offering of the people and the priests, willingly offering for the house of their God at Jerusalem." Three kinds of offerings for the temple are here spoken of: 1*st*, the gifts of the king and his counsellors for the service of the God of Israel; 2*d*, the gold and the silver that Ezra should obtain in the province of Babylon, *i.e.* by the collection which he was consequently empowered to make among the non-Israelite population of Babylon; 3*d*, the free-will offerings of his fellow-countrymen. הִתְנַדְּבוּת is an abstract formed from the infin. Hithpael: the freely given. The participle מִתְנַדְּבִין (not in the *stat. emph.*, *i.e.* without an article) is but slightly connected, in the sense of, if they, or what they, may freely offer.—Vers. 17–19. The application of these contributions. כָּל־קֳבֵל דְּנָה, for this very reason, *sc.* because furnished by the king and his counsellors, and by the heathen and Israelite inhabitants of Babylon, thou shalt diligently buy with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat-offerings and their drink-offerings (the meat and drink offerings pertaining by the law, Num. xv. 1, etc., to the sacrifices), and offer them upon the altar . . . The Pael תְּקָרְבוּ instead of the Aphel, vi. 10, 17. The distribution and collection were thus chiefly destined for the support of public worship, but were larger and more abundant than was necessary for this purpose. Hence the further injunction, ver. 18: "And whatsoever shall seem good to

thee and to thy brethren to do with the rest of the gold and the silver, that do after the will of your God," *i.e.* according to the precept of the law in which the will of God is expressed. "Thy brethren" are the priests, to whom was committed the care of the temple and its worship.—Ver. 19. The gold and silver vessels, moreover, which, according to viii. 25–27, the king and his counsellors, and the princes and all Israel, presented for the service of the house of God, he is to deliver before the God at Jerusalem (an abbreviated expression for the God whose dwelling is at Jerusalem). The noun פֻּלְחָן, only here and in the Targums, in the Syriac פּוּלְחָנָא, the service, corresponds with the Hebrew עֲבוֹדָה. שְׁלֵם in the Aphel, to complete, to make full, then to deliver entirely, to consign.—Ver. 20. Ezra is to defray the expenses of all other things necessary for the temple from the royal treasury, on which account a royal order is despatched to the treasurer on this side the river. "And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to give" (*i.e.* whatever necessary expenses shall be incurred which cannot be determined beforehand), and for which the gifts and contributions already furnished to Ezra shall not suffice, he is to give, *i.e.* to defray, out of the house of the king's treasures, *i.e.* the royal treasury. For this purpose Artaxerxes commands all the treasurers on this side the river, that whatsoever Ezra shall require of them shall be immediately done. אֲנָה is an emphatic repetition of the pronoun, as in Dan. vii. 15, and frequently in Hebrew. — Ver. 22. Unto one hundred talents of silver, one hundred cors of wheat, one hundred baths of wine, one hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescription, *i.e.* as much as is needed. Cor had already become, even in Hebrew, the later word for chomer, *e.g.* 1 Kings v. 2, Ezek. xlv. 14. It was equal to ten ephahs or baths, almost two sheffels; see my *bibl. Archäol.* ii. § 126. The command closes with the injunction, ver. 23: Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, *i.e.* whatever is needful according to the law for the service of God, let it be completely done for the

house of the God of heaven; for why should the wrath of heaven come upon the realm of the king and of his sons? The ἁπ λεγ. אַדַרְזְדָא is derived from the Aryan, but is not to be regarded (as by Hitzig and Bertheau) as compounded of אַדַר and אִזְדָא; but probably (as by Haug in Ewald's *bibl. Jahrb.* v. p. 152) as formed of the Persian دَرِشْت, *dorest*, with א prosthetic, from the Zend root *doreç*, to grow, to flourish, to become firm, in the meaning of perfect in all parts, exact. The motive of the royal order, that the priests may offer acceptable offerings to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and of his sons, recalls vi. 10. On the formula דִּי לְמָה, for why should wrath come, comp. iv. 22.—Ver. 24. The priests, the Levites, and all the servants of the temple, are also to be free from all customs and taxes. וּלְכֹם מְהוֹדְעִין, we also make known to you (it is made known to you). These words also are addressed to the treasurers, as levyers of taxes on this side the river. That, with regard to all priests, . . . and (other) ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose upon them toll, tribute, or custom. The פַּלְחֵי בֵית אֱלָהָא are not worshippers in the house of God, but they who do service in the house of God. The expression comprises any servants of the temple who might have been omitted in the classes enumerated. On מְנִדָּה בְלוֹ וגו׳, comp. iv. 13. לָא שַׁלִּיט, (any one) has no right, with an infinitive following: it is allowed to no one to do. מְרְמָא from רְמָא, Targ. for שִׂים. On this matter, compare Josephus, *Ant.* xii. 3. 3, according to which Antiochus the Great freed the priests and Levites from taxation.—Ver. 25, etc. Finally, Ezra is empowered to appoint over his whole people (all the Jews) on this side the river, judges who know the law of God, and to inflict severe penalties upon those who transgress it.—Ver. 25. "Thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God which is in thy hand (דִּי בִידָךְ like ver. 14), set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are on this side the river, namely all such as know the laws of thy God, and teach ye them that know them not." The form מְנִי is imper. Pael for

מַנִּי, the A sound probably passing in rapid speech into the flatter E sound. "*All* the people on this side the river" is limited to Israelites or Jews by the further particulars, "who know the law of thy God," etc. These are to receive from Ezra judges, viz. such as are acquainted with the law, *i.e.* Israelite judges, and thus to be placed under the jurisdiction established at Jerusalem. The sentence, "and they who know it (the law) not, them teach ye, make them acquainted with it," does not refer to the heathen, but to born Israelites or Jews, who, living among the heathen, had not hitherto made the Mosaic law the rule of their lives. Such were the judges to constrain to the observance and obedience of the law.—Ver. 26. But whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let a court be speedily (מְהֵנָה) held on his account (*i.e.* let him be brought to justice, and punished). This, too, applies chiefly to such as were Israelites born. The law of the king is the present edict, the commission therein entrusted to Ezra: whoever opposes, neglects, or transgresses it, shall be condemned, whether to death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment. הֵן ... הֵן = the Hebrew אִם ... אִם = *sive* ... *sive*. שְׁרֹשִׁי (Keri שְׁרֹשִׁי), rooting out (from שָׁרַשׁ, to root out), *i.e.* banishment, *exilium* (Vulg.), not παιδεία (LXX.).

Vers. 27 and 28. This royal commission granted to the Jews all they could possibly desire from the heathen governors of the country, for the establishment and furtherance of their civil and religious polity. By granting these privileges, Artaxerxes was not only treading in the footsteps of Cyrus and Darius Hystaspes, but even going beyond these princes in granting to the Jews a jurisdiction of their own. Without a magistrate who was one of themselves, the Jewish community could not well prosper in their own land; for the social and religious life of Israel were so closely connected, that heathen magistrates, however well-intentioned, were incapable of exercising a beneficial influence upon the welfare of the Jews. Hence Ezra, having thus reported the royal commission, adds a thanksgiving to God for having put such a thing into the king's heart, namely,

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to beautify the house of the Lord, and for having granted him favour before the king and his counsellors. The sentence וְעָלַי הִטָּה is a continuation of the preceding infinitive sentence in the *tempus finit.* לְ before כָּל־שָׂרָי is the לְ comprehensive. Ezra names the beautifying of the house of God as the occasion of his thanksgiving, not only because this formed the chief matter of the royal favour, but also because the re-establishment of divine worship was the re-establishment of the moral and religious life of the community. "And I felt myself strengthened, and gathered together (so that I gathered together) the heads of Israel to go up with me (to Jerusalem)." Ezra assembled the heads, *i.e.* of houses, as fellow-travellers, because their decision would be a rule for the families at the head of which they stood. With their heads, the several races and families determined to return to the land of their fathers.

CHAP. VIII.—LIST OF THOSE HEADS OF HOUSES WHO RETURNED WITH EZRA, AND ACCOUNT OF THE JOURNEY.

Vers. 1–14. *A list of those heads of houses who returned with Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem.* Compare the parallel list, 1 Esdr. viii. 28–40.—Ver. 1. The title: "These are the heads of the houses, and (this is) their genealogy, who went up with me." רָאשֵׁי אֲבֹתֵיהֶם for רָאשֵׁי בֵית־אֲבֹתֵיהֶם, as frequently. וְהִתְיַחֵשָׂם, "and their genealogy," is added, because in the list following the heads of the different houses are not merely enumerated according to their own names, but the names of the races to which they belonged are also stated.—Ver. 2. Priests and descendants of David. Of priests, Gershom of the sons of Phinehas, and Daniel of the sons of Ithamar. Gershom and Daniel are the names of heads of priestly houses, and "sons of Phinehas and sons of Ithamar", designations of races. Phinehas was the son of the high priest Eleazar, the son of Aaron, and Ithamar a younger son of Aaron, 1 Chron. v. 30 and 29. This does not signify that only the two priests Gershom and Daniel went up with Ezra; for in ver. 24 he chose twelve from

among the chief of the priests, who went up with him, to have charge of the gifts (Bertheau). The meaning is, that Gershom and Daniel, two heads of priestly houses, went up, and that the house of Gershom belonged to the race of Phinehas, and that of Daniel to the race of Ithamar. A Daniel is named among the priests in Neh. x. 7, but whether he is identical with the Daniel in question does not appear. Of the sons (descendants) of David (the king), Hattush, as head of a house. A Hattush, son of Hashabniah, occurs Neh. iii. 10, and a priest of this name Neh. x. 5 and xii. 2. Hattush also holds the first place among the sons of Shemaiah enumerated 1 Chron. iii. 22, who probably were among the descendants of David. It seems strange that the numbers neither of the priests nor of the sons of David who went up with Ezra should be given, since from ver. 3 onwards, in the case of the houses of lay races, the numbers of those who returned to the home of their ancestors is regularly stated.—Vers. 3–14. Twelve lay houses are named both in the present text and in 1 Esdr. viii. 30–40. In ten cases the names of the races, which are uniformly introduced with מִבְּנֵי, are identical in both texts, viz. Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Adin, Elam, Shephatiah, Joab, Bebai, Azgad, Adonikam, and Bigvai. On the other hand, it appears surprising, 1*st*, that in the first house mentioned, before the name זְכַרְיָה, besides "of the sons of Parosh," we have also מִבְּנֵי שְׁכַנְיָה (ver. 3), while before all the other names we find only "of the sons of" one individual; 2*dly*, that in ver. 5, after בְּנֵי שְׁכַנְיָה, instead of a name of the head of a house, only Ben Jahaziel follows; 3*dly*, that in ver. 10 also, after וּמִבְּנֵי שְׁלוֹמִית, we have merely Ben Josiphiah, the names themselves being apparently omitted in these two last cases. This conjecture is corroborated by a comparison with the LXX. and 1 Esdr. viii., which shows, moreover, that it is not the personal name of the head of the house, but the name of the race, which has been lost. For מבני שכניה בן יחזיאל, ver. 5, we find in the LXX. *ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν Ζαθόης Ζεχενίας υἱὸς Ἀζιήλ*, and in 1 Esdr. viii. 32, *ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Ζαθόης Σεχενίας Ἰεζήλου*;

and for ומבני שלומית בן יוספיה, ver. 10, in the LXX. *καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν Baανί Σελιμοὺθ υἱὸς Ἰωσεφία*, and in 1 Esdr. viii. 36, *ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Βανίας Σαλιμὼθ Ἰωσαφίου*. In *Ζαθόης* and *Baανί* (*Βανίας*) we recognise זַתּוּא and בָּנִי of Ezra ii. 8 and 10. Hence the text of ver. 5 needs emendation, and should run מִבְּנֵי זַתּוּא שְׁכַנְיָה, and that of ver. 10, וּמִבְּנֵי בָנִי שְׁלוֹמִית. It is more difficult to decide concerning מִבְּנֵי שְׁכַנְיָה of ver. 3, though undoubtedly we have here too a corruption of the text. For, first, there is no other instance in the whole list of the sons of two men being cited before the proper name of the house; and then, too, the absence of the ו copulative before מִבְּנֵי פ' is opposed to the notion that the house of Zechariah was formed by a union of the sons of Shecaniah and Parosh, since in this case the *and* could not be omitted. It is true that we have in the LXX. *ἀπὸ υἱῶν Σαχανία καὶ ἀπὸ υἱῶν Φόρος*; but in this case the *καὶ* is certainly derived from the translator, who was thus seeking to make sense of the words. In 1 Esdr. viii. we read *Λαττοὺς τοῦ Σεχενίου*; and *Λαττοὺς* corresponding with חַטּוּשׁ, the words בני שכניה (or בן) are taken into the preceding verse. This treatment of the words Bertheau considers correct, because Hattush in 1 Chron. iii. 22 is reckoned among the descendants of Shecaniah. This conjecture is, however, a very doubtful one. For, first, in 1 Chron. iii. 22 Hattush is said to be of the sons of Shemaiah, and Shemaiah of the sons of Shecaniah; then we should as little expect any further statement in the case of Hattush as in the cases of Daniel and Gershom; and further, if he had been thus more precisely designated by naming his father, we should undoubtedly read בֶּן שְׁכַנְיָה, not מִבְּנֵי ש', and thus the Masoretic text would at any rate be incorrect; and finally, 1 Esdras, where it differs from the LXX., is, generally speaking, no critical authority upon which to base safe conclusions. Under these circumstances, we must give up the hope of restoring the original text, and explaining the words מבני שכניה. עִמּוֹ הִתְיַחֵשׂ, "and with Zechariah, his genealogy of 150 males," *i.e.* with him his race, consisting of 150 males, registered in the genealogy of the race. In the

case of the names which follow, the number only is given after the briefer expression עִמּוֹ.

A review, then, of the twelve races, according to the restoration of the original text in vers. 5 and 10, presents us with names already occurring in the list of the races who came from Babylon with Zerubbabel, ii. 3–15, with the exception of the sons of Joab, ver. 9, who are wanting in chap. ii., where, on the other hand, several other races are enumerated. Bertheau seeks to identify the sons of Joab, ver. 9, with the sons of Joab who in ii. 6 are reckoned with the sons of Pahath-Moab, and to explain their special enumeration in the present list, by the conjecture that the one house subsequently separated into the two houses of Pahath-Moab and Joab. This is, indeed, possible; but it is quite as probable that only one portion or branch of the sons (descendants) of Joab was combined with the race of the sons of Pahath-Moab, and that the rest of the *bne Joab* formed a separate house, no family of which returned with Zerubbabel. The occurrence of the other races in both lists is to be explained by the circumstance that portions of them returned with Zerubbabel, and that the rest did not follow till Ezra's departure.—Ver. 13. The addition אַחֲרֹנִים, last (comp. 2 Sam. xix. 12), is thus explained by J. H. Mich.: *respectu eorum qui primum cum Zorobabele sub Cyro in patriam redierunt c.* ii. 13. Bertheau, however, considers this explanation untenable, because אחרנים stands in the present series only with the sons of Adonikam, while it is nevertheless certain, that many families belonging also to other races than this had returned with Zerubbabel, in comparison with whom all who returned with Ezra might be called *last.* This reason, however, is not conclusive; for in ver. 13 the further statement also differs, both in form and matter, from those in the former verses. Here, instead of the name of the head of the house, we read the words "last, and these their names;" whereupon three names are given, and not till then וְעִמָּהֶם וגו׳, "and with them sixty males." Here, then, it is not the head of the house who is named, but in his place three heads of families, amounting together

to sixty males. Now, as these three families did not form a house, these sixty sons of Adonikam who returned with Ezra are, with regard to the six hundred and sixty-six sons of Adonikam who returned with Zerubbabel, designated the last, or last arrived, and thus comprised with them as one house.—Ver. 14. Of the sons of Bigvai also two heads are named, Uthai and Zabbud, and with them seventy males. In 1 Esdr. viii. 40, the names Uthai and Zabbud are corrupted into *Οὐθὶ ὁ τοῦ Ἰσταλκούρου.* The total number of individuals belonging to these twelve races, who returned with Ezra, amounts, according to the Hebrew text, to 1496 males and fifteen heads; according to 1 Esdras, to 1690 males, and the thirteen heads of the twelve races, without reckoning the priests and sons of David, whose numbers are not stated.

Vers. 15–36. *Account of the journey.*—Vers. 15–20. The assembling of the expedition. When the Israelites who were about to return to Jerusalem had assembled, and were ready for starting, Ezra perceived that there were no Levites among them. He then sent for certain chief men among them, and by means of the influence of Iddo, the chief at the place Casiphia, induced a number of Levites and Nethinim to determine on joining the expedition (vers. 15–20). He then proclaimed a fast at the place of meeting, for the purpose of supplicating God to grant them a prosperous journey (vers. 21–23). — Ver. 15. The travellers assembled at the river Ahava, where they encamped three days. In ver. 15 the river is designated הַבָּא אֶל־אַהֲוָא, *i.e.* either which comes (flows) towards Ahava, or flows into Ahava; in ver. 21 it is more briefly called נְהַר אַהֲוָא, and in ver. 31 נְהַר אַהֲוָא, which may mean the river of Ahava, of the region or district called Ahava, or, after the analogy of נְהַר פְּרָת, merely the river of the name of Ahava. It is doubtful which of these meanings is correct, the name Ahava being still unexplained. Comp. the various conjectures in A. G. F. Schirmer, *observationes exeg. crit. in libr. Esdræ*, Vratisl. 1820, p. 28 sqq. The connection points to a place or district in the neighbourhood of Babylon;

hence Bertheau is inclined to regard Ahava as a tributary or canal of the Euphrates, flowing through a place, perhaps only a field or open space, of the same name, in the immediate neighbourhood of Babylon; while Ewald supposes it may be the river somewhat to the west or south of Euphrates, called by the Greeks Pallacopas, whose situation would suit the context, and whose name might arise from בלג אהוא, the river Ahwa or Aba. The LXX. gives the name *Εὐί*; in 1 Esdr. viii. 40 and 61 we find *Θερά*, evidently a false reading. Josephus says quite generally, *εἰς τὸ πέραν τοῦ Εὐφράτου*. —When Ezra, during the three days' encampment at this place, directed his attention to the people and the priests (הָבִין בְּ, to give heed, Neh. xiii. 7, Dan. ix. 23, and elsewhere), he found no Levites among those who had assembled. Ver. 16. He then sent several chief men to Iddo, the chief man in the place Casiphia, to beg him and his brethren to bring him servants for the house of God. The LXX. translates אֶשְׁלְחָה לְ, "I sent to (or for) Eliezer," etc., which would mean to fetch them: "that I might then send them to Iddo." The Vulgate, on the other hand, and many expositors, understand לְ as *nota accus.*, like 2 Chron. xvii. 7, which is simpler. Of the nine men here designated as רָאשִׁים, the names of Eliezer, Shemaiah, Jarib, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam occur again in x. 15, 18-31, though we cannot certainly infer the indentity of those who bear them. The appellation רָאשִׁים does not determine whether they belonged to the priesthood or laity. The two remaining are called מְבִינִים, teachers; comp. Neh. viii. 7, 9, 1 Chron. xv. 22, xxv. 8, and elsewhere. Although this word is, in the passages cited, used of Levites, yet we cannot suppose those here named to have been teaching Levites, because, according to ver. 16, there were as yet no Levites amongst the assemblage; hence, too, they could not be teachers properly so called, but only men of wisdom and understanding. The Chethiv ואוצאה must be read וְאוֹצִיאָה: I sent them to (עַל, according to later usage, for אֶל); the Keri is וְאֲצַוֶּה, I despatched, sent them. Both readings suit the sense. The place Casiphia is entirely unknown, but cannot have been far from the river Ahava.

Caspia, the region of the Caspian Sea, is out of the question, being far too remote. "I put words in their mouth to speak to Iddo," *i.e.* I told them exactly what they should say to Iddo; comp. 2 Sam. xiv. 3, 19. The words אִדּוֹ אָחִיו הַנְּתִינִים give no intelligible meaning; for אָחִיו we must, with the Vulgate, 1 Esdras, and others, read וְאֶחָיו: to Iddo and his brethren, the Nethinim, at the place Casiphia. This would seem to say that Iddo was one of the Nethinim. Such an inference is not, however, a necessary one; for the expression may also, like "Zadok the (high) priest and his brethren, the (ordinary) priests," 1 Chron. xvi. 39, be understood to mean that Iddo, the chief man of that place, was a Levite, and that the Nethinim were, as a lower order of temple servants, called brethren of Iddo the Levite. The circumstance that not only Nethinim, but also Levites, were induced by Iddo to join the expedition (8–20), requires us thus to understand the words. מְשָׁרְתִים לְבֵית אֱלֹהֵינוּ, servants for the house of God, are Levites and Nethinim, the upper and lower orders of temple ministers. From ver. 17 it appears that both Levites and Nethinim had settled in the place Casiphia, and that Iddo, as the chief man of the place, held an influential position among them. No further inferences, however, concerning their settlement and employment can be drawn from this circumstance.—Vers. 18 and 19. The delegates sent to Iddo succeeded, through the gracious assistance of God (כְּיַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ, see vii. 6), in inducing forty Levites, and two hundred and twenty Nethinim, by means of Iddo's influence, to join their fellow-countrymen in their journey to Jerusalem. They brought to us . . . לָנוּ and עָלֵינוּ refer to Ezra and his fellow-travellers. אִישׁ שֵׂכֶל, a man of understanding, seems to be a proper name, being joined to Sherebiah, the name following, by a ו copulative. He was one of the descendants of Mahli, the son, *i.e.* grandson, of Levi the son of Israel, *i.e.* Jacob: comp. Ex. vi. 16, 19, 1 Chron. vi. 4. Sherebiah occurs again in ver. 24, and Neh. viii. 7, ix. 4, etc., x. 13, xii. 24. The Levite Hashabiah, ver. 19, is also named again, ver. 24, Neh. x. 2, and xii. 24 · while the name of the Levite Jeshaiah, on the

contrary, is not again met with in the books of either Ezra or Nehemiah.—Ver. 20. With respect to the Nethinim, whom David and the princes (of Israel) had given for the service of the Levites (*i.e.* made servants of the temple, to perform the lowest offices for the Levites), comp. Josh. ix. 21 and Ezra ii. 43. "They all were distinguished by name," *i.e.* were men of note; comp. remarks on 1 Chron. xii. 31.

Vers. 21–30. The last preparations for the journey.—Ver. 21. When the company of fellow-travellers was thus completed, Ezra proclaimed a fast at the place of meeting at the river Ahava, "that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek of Him a prosperous journey for ourselves, our families, and our goods." Fasting, as a means of humbling themselves before God, for the purpose of obtaining an answer to their petitions, was an ancient custom with the Israelites: Judg. xx. 26; 1 Sam. vii. 6; Joel i. 14; 2 Chron. xx. 3. דֶּרֶךְ יְשָׁרָה, a straight way, a way made level by the removal of obstructions, *i.e.* a prosperous journey; comp. Ps. cxii. 7. טַף, a noun collective, properly the little children, more frequently denoted the entire family, a man's wives and children; see remarks on Ex. xii. 37. רְכוּשׁ, possessions in cattle and other goods.—Ver. 22. For I was ashamed to request of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against enemies in the way (*i.e.* to protect us from hostile attacks during our journey); for we had said to the king: The hand of our God is over all them that seek him for good (*i.e.* for their good), and His power and His wrath against all them that forsake Him. עָזּוֹ in connection with אַפּוֹ is not His powerful wrath, but His power and might to conquer all enemies, evidencing itself in wrath against the wicked. This confession, which they had uttered before the king, they desired to make good by earnest humble supplication, that God would prove Himself their help and defence against all their enemies. And for this—adds Ezra, looking back on their prosperous journey after it was accomplished—He was entreated of us. Because they had supplicated His assistance by prayer and fasting,

God granted them His protection by the way.—Vers. 24–30. Then Ezra delivered the gold, the silver, and the vessels, which he had received as gifts for the temple, to twelve of the chiefs of the priests, and twelve Levites, that they might take charge of them during the journey, and bring them to Jerusalem. "I separated twelve of the chief of the priests," *i.e.* from the whole company of priests who were journeying with us. The following לְשֵׂרֵבְיָה does not suit the sense, whether we take the ל as a sign of the dative (LXX.) or of the accusative (Vulgate, and several expositors). For Sherebiah and Hashabiah were neither priests nor chiefs of priests, but Levites of the race of Merari (ver. 18), and cannot therefore be reckoned among the twelve chiefs of priests. If we take לשרביה for a dative, and translate, "I separated twelve of the chiefs of the priests for Sherebiah and Hashabiah," this would place the priests in a servile relation to the Levites, contrary to their true position. For לשרביה we must read וְשֵׂרֵבְיָה, and accept the reading of 1 Esdras, *καὶ Ἐσερεβίαν*, as correct. Ezra separated twelve chiefs of the priests and twelve Levites, for the purpose of delivering to their custody the gifts of gold, silver, and implements for the temple. Of the chiefs of the priests no names are mentioned; of the Levites, the two names Sherebiah and Hashabiah are given as those of heads of houses, with whom ten other Levites were associated.—Ver. 25, etc. To these chief priests and Levites Ezra weighed the silver and the gold and the vessels; שָׁקַל, to weigh, *i.e.* to deliver by weight. In the Chethiv אֲשָׁקוֹלָה the O sound is maintained, and consequently the Keri is pointed ־ֶ. On the other hand, in ver. 26 the ו is dropped, and the form pointed with ־ֶ, though many MSS., followed by J. H. Michaelis, have ־ֵ here also. תְּרוּמַת בֵּית אל׳ is in apposition with the before-named objects: the gold, the silver, and the vessels, the offering for the house of our God, which the king, his councillors . . . had offered; comp. vii. 15, 16, 19. In הֵרִימוּ the article represents the relative pronoun; see on 1 Chron. xxvi. 28. הַנִּמְצָאִים, all Israelites who were found, met with, in Babylon, and were not going

with them to Jerusalem; comp. 1 Chron. xxix. 17, 2 Chron. v. 11. עַל יָדָם, like עַל יַד, i. 8, to their hand, *i.e.* handed over to their keeping. The gifts amounted to: six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels one hundred in talents, *i.e.* one hundred talents in value, one hundred talents of gold, and twenty covered basins of gold (comp. i. 10) one thousand dariks in value, and two brazen vessels of fine golden brilliancy, precious as gold. מְצֻהָב is an abstract noun, formed from the participle Hophal of צָהַב, to glitter like gold, and constructed as a feminine. The word, with its adjective, either depends upon נְחֹשֶׁת, in the *stat. construct.*, or stands in apposition thereto, and is not, as a participle Hophal, used adjectively and combined with נְחֹשֶׁת, for then the two adjectives מְצֻהָב and טוֹבָה would not be in different genders. חֲמוּדוֹת, like כְּלֵי חֲמוּדוֹת, 2 Chron. xx. 25.—Ver. 28, etc. On delivering these treasures, Ezra adds the admonition: Ye are holy to the Lord, and the vessels are holy, and the gold and the silver are a free-will offering unto the Lord God of your fathers; watch and keep (that which is committed to you). Since they were themselves, as priests and Levites, holy to the Lord, they were also to treat and keep the gifts committed to their charge as holy gifts, until, on their arrival at Jerusalem, they should weigh them (*i.e.* deliver them by weight) before the priests, the Levites, and the princes of Israel, in the chambers of the house of the Lord. The article to הַלִּשְׁכוֹת (*stat. construct.*) is among the incorrectnesses of the later Hebrew.—Ver. 30. Then they took the weight of the silver, . . . *i.e.* received the silver, etc., delivered to them by weight.

Vers. 31–36. The start, the journey, and the arrival at Jerusalem.—Ver. 31. The start from the river Ahava (comp. ver. 15) did not take place till the twelfth day of the first month; while according to vii. 9, the journey from Babylon was appointed for the first day of the month, and according to viii. 15, the bands of travellers who assembled at the river Ahava encamped there three days. These statements may be reconciled as follows: On the first day the company of travellers began to assemble, and during the three days'

encampment at the place of meeting Ezra became aware that no Levites were found among the travellers; upon which he took the measures mentioned, ver. 16, etc., to induce certain Levites and Nethinim to accompany them. When these were afterwards present, Ezra ordained a fast, to supplicate the divine protection for the journey, and committed the sacred gifts to the care of the priests and Levites. Eight days elapsed while these preparations for departure were being made, so that the start from the river Ahava did not take place till the twelfth day. The journey was successfully accomplished, God's gracious protection delivering them from the hands of enemies and marauders; comp. ver. 22.—Vers. 32, 33. They arrived at Jerusalem, as stated vii. 9, on the first day of the fifth month, the journey consequently occupying three months and a half. The particulars of the journey are not communicated; and as we do not even know the locality of the place of meeting at the river Ahava, the length of road to be traversed cannot be determined. After their arrival at Jerusalem, they abode, *i.e.* remained, as Nehemiah subsequently did, quiet and inactive three days, to recover from the fatigues and hardships of the journey, Neh. ii. 11, before they undertook the arrangement of their affairs. On the fourth day, the gifts they had brought with them were delivered in the house of God (נִשְׁקָל, like אֶשְׁקְלָה, ver. 16) into the hand of Meremoth and Eleazar the priests, and Jozabad and Noadiah, two Levites, who took charge of them, the chiefs of the priests and Levites being, according to ver. 29, also present. Meremoth Ben Uriah reappears in Neh. iii. 4, 21, and is also intended Neh. xii. 3. Eleazar the son of Phinehas, and the Levite Noadiah, are not again met with. Jozabad, of the sons of Jeshua (ii. 40), may be the Levite Jozabad mentioned x. 23. Binnui is named among the Levites, Neh. x. 10 and xii. 8.—Ver. 34. "By number, by weight, as to all," *i.e.* all was delivered by number and weight; and the whole weight was written at that time, *i.e.* an authentic list was made at the delivery which then took place.—Ver. 35. After the delivery of the dedicated gifts, those who had

come up out of captivity (with Ezra), the sons of the captivity, offered burnt-offerings and sin-offerings, out of gratitude for the favour shown by God in the gracious restoration of His people Israel. This is implied in the words: "burnt-offerings to the God of Israel, twelve bullocks *for all Israel*" (the twelve tribes), and twelve he-goats for a sin-offering, as in vi. 17. Ninety-six (8 × 12) lambs and seventy-seven lambs (77, the intensified seven) were likewise brought as a burnt-offering. "All this was a burnt-offering for the LORD," of which, therefore, nothing could be eaten by the offerers. The sin-offering preceded the burnt-offering, as the necessary basis of an acceptable burnt-offering. The sin-offerings availed as an atonement for the sins of all Israel, and the burnt-offerings typified the surrender of the entire nation to the service of the Lord. Thus the fact that these were offered for all Israel was an actual declaration that they who had now returned were henceforth resolved, together with all Israel, to dedicate their lives to the service of the Lord their God.—Ver. 36. Here upon the royal decrees (the commission, vii. 12–26) were delivered to the satraps of the king, and to the governors on this side the river; and they furthered the people and the house of God, as Artaxerxes had commanded in his edict, vii. 20–24. On אֲחַשְׁדַּרְפְּנִים and פַּחֲוֹת, see rem. on Dan. iii. 2. The satraps were the military chiefs of the province, the פַּחֲוֹת, the heads of the civil government. נָשָׂא, to lift up, to support, like i. 4.

CHAP. IX. X.—EZRA'S PROCEEDINGS IN THE SEVERANCE OF THE STRANGE WOMEN FROM THE CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL.

When Ezra, some time after his arrival, was in the temple at Jerusalem, the princes of the people informed him that the Israelites had mingled themselves by marriage with the people of the lands (ix. 1, 2). Deeply moved by this communication, he sat astonished till the time of the evening sacrifice, while all who feared God's word assembled about

him (vers. 3, 4). At the evening sacrifice he fell upon his knees and prayed, making a touching confession of sin before God, in the name of the congregation (vers. 5–15). During this prayer many were gathered around him weeping, and Shecaniah coming forth from their midst, acknowledged the transgressions of the congregation, and declared that they would make a covenant with God to put away all the strange wives (x. 1–4). After making the princes, the priests, and Levites take an oath that they would do according to the declaration thus made, Ezra left the temple and retired to the chamber of Johanan, to fast and mourn over the transgression of those who had returned from captivity (vers. 5, 6). An assembly at Jerusalem was then proclaimed, and those who should not attend it were threatened with heavy penalties (vers. 7–9). At this assembly Ezra reproved the people for their transgression, and called upon them to separate themselves from the people of the countries, and from the strange wives (vers. 10, 11); upon which the assembly resolved to appoint a commission to investigate and decide upon individual cases. In spite of the opposition of some, this proposal was accepted, and the commission named (vers. 12–17), which held its sittings from the first day of the tenth month, and made an end of its investigations into all cases brought before it by the close of the year. Then follows the list of those who had taken strange wives (vers. 18–44), with which the book concludes.

Chap. ix. *Information given of the intermingling of Israel with the heathen nations of the land by marriage* (vers. 1–4), *and Ezra's prayer and confession* (vers. 5–15).—Vers. 1, 2. "When this was done, the princes came to me, and said, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, do not separate themselves from the people of the lands, according to their abominations, (even) of the Canaanites; . . . for they have taken (wives) of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, and the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of the lands." What now follows is placed in close chronological sequence with what precedes by the formula וּכְכַלּוֹת אֵלֶּה, at the time of the completion of these things;

comp. 2 Chron. xxxi. 1, xxix. 29, vii. 1. אֵלֶּה are the things related chap. viii. 33–36. Of these the delivery of the gifts took place on the fourth day after Ezra's arrival at Jerusalem, *i.e.* on the fourth or fifth day of the first month (comp. viii. 32, etc., with vii. 9). The sacrifices (viii. 35) would undoubtedly be offered immediately; and the royal orders would be transmitted to the satraps and governors (viii. 36) very soon after. As soon, then, as Ezra received intelligence concerning the illegal marriages, he took the matter in hand, so that all related (ix. 3–10) occurred on one day. The first assemblage of the people with relation to this business was not, however, held till the twentieth day of the ninth month (x. 9); while on the calling of this meeting, appearance thereat was prescribed within three days, thus leaving apparently an interval of nine whole months between chap. viii. and ix. Hence Bertheau conjectures that the first proclamation of this assembly encountered opposition, because certain influential personages were averse to the further prosecution of this matter (x. 15). But though x. 4–7 does not inform us what period elapsed between the adoption of Shecaniah's proposal to Ezra, and the proclamation for assembling the people at Jerusalem, the narrative does not give the impression that this proclamation was delayed for months through the opposition it met with. Besides, Ezra may have received the information concerning the unlawful marriages, not during the month of his arrival at Jerusalem, but some months later. We are not told whether it was given immediately, or soon after the completion of the matters mentioned viii. 33–36. The delivery of the royal commands to the satraps and governors (viii. 36) may have occupied weeks or months, the question being not merely to transmit the king's decrees to the said officials, but to come to such an understanding with them as might secure their favour and goodwill in assisting the newly established community, and supporting the house of God. The last sentence (viii. 36), "And they furthered the people and the house of God," plainly shows that such an understanding with the royal functionaries was effected, by transactions which

must have preceded what is related chap. ix. This matter having been arranged, and Ezra being now about to enter upon the execution of his commission to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of his God (vii. 12), he received information of the illegal marriages. While he was in the temple, the princes (הַשָּׂרִים, the princes, are those who give the information, the article being used *e.g.* like that in הַפֶּלֶט, Gen. xiv. 13) came to him, saying: The people (viz. Israel, the priests, and the Levites; the three classes of the Israelite community) do not separate themselves from the people of the lands; comp. vi. 21. כְּתוֹעֲבֹתֵיהֶם, with respect to their abominations, *i.e.* as Israel should have done with respect to the abominations of these people. The לְ to לְכְנַעֲנִי might be regarded as introducing the enumeration of the different nations, and corresponding with מֵעַמֵּי; it is, however, more likely that it is used merely as a periphrasis for the genitive, and subordinates the names to תּוֹעֲבֹתֵיהֶם: their, *i.e.* the Canaanites', etc., abominations, the suffix relating, as *e.g.* at iii. 12 and elsewhere, to the names following. Five Canaanitish races are here named, as in Ex. xiii. 5, with this difference, that the Perizzites are here substituted for the Hivites, while in Ex. iii. 8, xxiii. 23, both are enumerated, making six; to these are added in Deut. vii. 1 the Girgashites, making, generally speaking, seven nations. Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians are here cited besides the Canaanitish races. The non-severance of the Israelites from these nations consisted, according to ver. 2, in the fact of their having contracted marriages with them. In the law, indeed (Ex. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3), only marriages with Canaanitish women were forbidden; but the reason of this prohibition, viz. that Israel might not be seduced by them to idolatry, made its extension to Moabites, Ammonites, and Egyptians necessary under existing circumstances, if an effectual check was to to be put to the relapse into heathenism of the Israelitish community, now but just gathered out again from among the Gentiles. For during the captivity idolaters of all nations had settled in the depopulated country, and mingled with the remnant of the Israelites left there. B

"the people of the lands," however, we are not to understand, with J. H. Michaelis, remnants of the races subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar and carried to Babylon,—who were now, after seventy years, returning, as well as the Jews, to their native lands under Cyrus; in support of which view Mich. incorrectly refers to Jer. xxv. 9, etc.,—but those portions, both of the ancient Canaanitish races and of the Moabites and Ammonites, who, escaping the sentence of captivity, remained in the land. נָשְׂאוּ is naturally completed by נָשִׁים from the context; comp. x. 44, 2 Chron. xi. 21, and other passages. The subject of הִתְעָרְבוּ is the collective זֶרַע הַקֹּדֶשׁ, the holy seed, *i.e.* the members of the nation called to holiness (Ex. xix. 5). The appellation is taken from Isa. vi. 13, where the remnant of the covenant people, preserved in the midst of judgments, and purified thereby, is called a holy seed. The second part of ver. 2 contains an explanatory accessory clause: and the hand of the princes and rulers hath been first in this unfaithfulness (מַעַל, comp. Lev. v. 15), *i.e.* the princes were the first to transgress; on the figurative expression, comp. Deut. xiii. 10. סְגָנִים is an Old-Persian word naturalized in Hebrew, signifying commander, prefect; but its etymology is not as yet satisfactorily ascertained: see Delitzsch on Isa. xli. 25.—Ver. 3, etc. This information threw Ezra into deep grief and moral consternation. The tearing of the upper and under garments was a sign of heartfelt and grievous affliction (Josh. viii. 6); see remarks on Lev. x. 6. The plucking out of (a portion of) the hair was the expression of violent wrath or moral indignation, comp. Neh. xiii. 25, and is not to be identified with the cutting off of the hair in mourning (Job i. 20). "And sat down stunned;" מְשׁוֹמֵם, desolate, rigid, stunned, without motion. While he was sitting thus, there were gathered unto him all who feared the word of God concerning the transgression of those that had been carried away. חָרֵד, trembling, being terrified, generally, construed with עַל or אֶל (*e.g.* Isa. lxvi. 2, 5), but here with בְּ (like verbs of embracing, believing), and meaning to believe with trembling in the word which God had spoken concerning this מַעַל, *i.e.* thinking with terror

of the punishments which such faithless conduct towards a covenant God involved.

Vers. 5–15. *Ezra's prayer and confession for the congregation.*—Ver. 5. And at the time of the evening sacrifice, I rose up from my mortification (תַּעֲנִית, humiliation, generally through fasting, here through sitting motionless in deep affliction of soul), and rending my garment and my mantle. These words contribute a second particular to קָמְתִּי, and do not mean that Ezra arose with his garments torn, but state that, on arising, he rent his clothing, and therefore again manifested his sorrow in this manner. He then fell on his knees, and spread out his hands to God (comp. 1 Kings viii. 22), to make a confession of the heavy guilt of the congregation before God, and thus impressively to set their sins before all who heard his prayer.—Ver. 6, etc. The train of thought in this prayer is as follows: I scarcely dare to lift up my face to God, through shame for the greatness of our misdeeds (ver. 6). From the days of our fathers, God has sorely punished us for our sins by delivering us into the power of our enemies; but has now again turned His pity towards us, and revived us in the place of His sanctuary, through the favour of the king of Persia (7–9). But we have again transgressed His commands, with the keeping of which God has connected our possession of the good land given unto us (vers. 10–12). Should we then, after God has spared us more than we through our trespasses have deserved, bring His wrath upon us, till we are wholly consumed? God is just; He has preserved us; but we stand before Him with heavy guilt upon us, such guilt that we cannot endure God's presence (vers. 13–15). Ezra does not pray for the pardon of their sin, for he desires only to bring the congregation to the knowledge of the greatness of their transgression, and so to invite them to do all that in them lies to atone for their guilt, and to appease God's wrath.—Ver. 6. "I am ashamed, and am covered with shame, to lift up my face to Thee, my God." בּוֹשְׁתִּי וְנִכְלַמְתִּי united, as in Jer. xxxi. 19, comp. Isa. xlv. 16, and other passages. נִכְלַם, to be covered with shame, is stronger

than בּוֹשׁ. "For our iniquities are increased over our head," *i.e.* have grown above our head. לְמַעְלָה רֹאשׁ, to or over the head. לְמַעְלָה serves to enhance the meaning of רָבוּ, like 1 Chron. xxiii. 17. "And our guiltiness is great, (reaching) unto the heavens;" comp. 2 Chron. xxviii. 9.—Ver. 7. "Since the days of our fathers, have we, our kings, our priests, been delivered into the hands of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to shame of face." The words from בַּחֶרֶב onwards serve to explain what is meant by being delivered into the hand of strange kings. On the expression בּשֶׁת פָּנִים, comp. Dan. ix. 7, etc., 2 Chron. xxxii. 21. כְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, as it is this day, as is to-day the case; see remarks on Dan. ix. 7. The thought is: We are still sorely suffering for our sins, by being yet under the yoke of foreign sovereigns.—Ver. 8. "And now for a little moment there has been mercy from the LORD our God, to leave us a rescued remnant, and to give us a nail in His holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage." He calls the short interval between their release from captivity by Cyrus, and the time when he is speaking, כִּמְעַט רֶגַע, a little moment (comp. Isa. xxvi. 20), in comparison with the long period of suffering from the times of the Assyrians (comp. Neh. ix. 32) till the reign of Cyrus. פְּלֵיטָה, a rescued remnant, is the new community delivered from Babylon, and returned to the land of their fathers. In proportion to the numerous population of former days, it was but a remnant that escaped destruction; but a remnant which, according to the predictions of the prophets, was again to grow into a large nation. A foundation for this hope was given by the fact that God had given them "a nail in the place of His sanctuary." The expression is figurative. יָתֵד is a nail or peg struck into the wall, to hang any kind of domestic utensils upon; comp. Isa. xxii. 23, etc. Such a nail was the place of God's sanctuary, the temple, to the rescued community. This was to them a firm nail, by which they were borne and upheld; and this nail God had given them as a support to which they might cling, and gain new life and vigour. The infinitive clauses

following, לְהָאִיר and לְתִתֵּנוּ, are dependent upon the preceding infinitives לְהַשְׁאִיר and וְלָתֶת, and state the purpose for which God has given a nail in His house to this remnant. That our God may enlighten our eyes, *i.e.* may bestow upon us new vitality; comp. Ps. xiii. 4. Suffering and misfortune make the eyes dim, and their light is quenched in death: the enlightened or beaming eye is an image of vital power; comp. 1 Sam. xiv. 27, 29. לְתִתֵּנוּ מִחְיָה is not to be translated, *ut daret nobis vivificationem*, the suffix to לְתִתֵּנוּ being not dative, but accusative. The literal rendering is: that He may make us a slight reviving. מִחְיָה, the means of supporting life, restoration to life; see on 2 Chron. xiv. 13. Ezra adds מְעַט; for the life to which the community had attained was but feeble, in comparison with a vigorous social life. Their deliverance from Babylon and return to the land of their fathers was, so to speak, a revival from death; compare the embodiment of this figure in Ezekiel's vision, Ezek. xxxvii. 1–14: they were, however, still in a state of vassalage, and had not yet regained their independence. This thought is further carried out in ver. 9: "For we are bondmen, yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy to us before the kings of Persia; so that they have given us a reviving to build up the house of our God, and to repair its ruins, and have given us a wall about us in Judah and Jerusalem." They who have returned to Jerusalem and Judah are still bondmen, for they are yet under the Persian yoke; but God has disposed the kings of Persia so to favour them as to give them a reviving, to enable them to rebuild the house of God. Cyrus and Darius had not merely permitted and commanded the building of the temple, but had also furnished them with considerable assistance towards the carrying out of this work; comp. i. 3, etc., vi. 7–9. The suffix in חָרְבָתִיו alludes to בֵּית אֱלֹהִים. The words of the last sentence are figurative. גָּדֵר means the wall of a vineyard, the wall or fence built for its protection (Isa. v. 2, 5). Hence the wall, or enclosure, is an image of protection from the incursions and attacks of enemies. Such a wall has been given

them in Judah and Jerusalem by the kings of Persia. "The meaning is not that they possess a place defended by walls (perhaps, therefore, the temple) in Jerusalem and Judah, but that the Persian kings have given to the new community a safe dwelling-place (or the means of existence), because the power of the Persian empire secures to the returned Israelites continued and undisturbed possession of the city and the land." (Bertheau.)

After this statement concerning the divine favour, Ezra next sets himself to describe the conduct of his countrymen with respect to the mercy extended to them. — Ver. 10. "And now, O our God, what can we say after this? That we have forsaken Thy commandments." זֹאת, *i.e.* such proofs of the divine compassion as have just been mentioned. The answer which follows commences with כִּי, before which נֹאמַר is mentally repeated: "we can only say that we have forsaken Thy commandments, requited Thy kindness with sins."—Ver. 11. Namely, the commandments "which Thou hast commanded by Thy servants the prophets, saying, The land unto which ye go to possess it is an unclean land through the uncleanness of the people of the lands, through their abominations, wherewith they have filled it from one end to another through their impurity. And now give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons (for wives), nor seek their peace nor their wealth for ever; that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever." The words of the prophets introduced by לֵאמֹר are found in these terms neither in the prophetical books nor the Pentateuch. They are not, therefore, to be regarded as a verbal quotation, but only as a declaration that the prohibition of intermarriage with the heathen had been inculcated by the prophets. The introduction of this prohibition by the words: the land unto which ye go to possess it, refers to the Mosaic age, and in using it Ezra had chiefly in view Deut. vii. 1–3. He interweaves, however, with this passage other sayings from the Pentateuch, *e.g.* Deut. xxiii. 7, and from the prophetic

writings, without designing to make a verbal quotation. He says quite generally, by His servants the prophets, as the author of the books of Kings does in similar cases, *e.g.* 2 Kings xvii. 23, xxi. 10, xxiv. 2, where the leading idea is, not to give the saying of some one prophet, but to represent the truth in question as one frequently reiterated. The sayings of Moses in Deuteronomy also bear a prophetical character; for in this book he, after the manner of the prophets, seeks to make the people lay to heart the duty of obeying the law. It is true that we do not meet in the other books of Scripture a special prohibition of marriages with Canaanites, though in the prophetical remarks, Judg. iii. 6, such marriages are reproved as occasions of seducing the Israelites to idolatry, and in the prophetic descriptions of the whoredoms of Israel with Baalim, and the general animadversions upon apostasy from the Lord, the transgression of this prohibition is implicitly included; thus justifying the general expression, that God had forbidden the Israelites to contract such marriages, by His servants the prophets. Besides, we must here take into consideration the threatening of the prophets, that the Lord would thrust Israel out of the land for their sins, among which intermarriage with the Canaanites was by no means the least. Ezra, moreover, makes use of the general expression, "by the prophets," because he desired to say that God had not merely forbidden these marriages once or twice in the law, but had also repeatedly inculcated this prohibition by the prophets. The law was preached by the prophets when they reiterated what was the will of God as revealed in the law of Moses. In this respect Ezra might well designate the prohibition of the law as the saying of the prophets, and cite it as pronounced according to the circumstances of the Mosaic period.[1] The words: the land into which ye go, etc., recall the introduction of the law in Deut. vii. 1, etc.; but the

[1] It is hence evident that these words of Ezra afford no evidence against the single authorship of the Pentateuch. The inference that a saying of the law, uttered during the wanderings in the wilderness, is here cited as a saying of the prophets, the servants of Jahve, is, accord-

description of the land as a land of uncleanness through the uncleanness of the people, etc., does not read thus either in the Pentateuch or in the prophets. נִדָּה, the uncleanness of women, is first applied to moral impurity by the prophets: comp. Lam. i. 17; Ezek. vii. 20, xxxvi. 17, comp. Isa. lxiv. 5. The expression מִפֶּה אֶל־פֶּה, from edge to edge, *i.e.* from one end to the other, like לְפֶה פֶּה, 2 Kings x. 21, xxi. 16, is taken from vessels filled to their upper rim. וְעַתָּה introduces the consequence: and now, this being the case. The prohibition אַל תִּתְּנוּ וגו׳ is worded after Deut. vii. 3. The addition: nor seek their peace, etc., is taken almost verbally from Deut. xxiii. 7, where this is said in respect of the Ammonites and Moabites. לְמַעַן תֶּחֱזְקוּ recalls Deut. xi. 8, and the promise: that ye may eat the good of the land for ever, Isa. i. 19. וְהוֹרַשְׁתֶּם לִבְנֵיכֶם, and leave it for an inheritance to your children, does not occur in this form in the Pentateuch, but only the promise: that they and their children should possess the land for ever. On הוֹרִישׁ in this sense comp. Judg. xi. 24, 2 Chron. xx. 11.—Ver. 13, etc. And after all, continues Ezra, taking up again the אַחֲרֵי־זֹאת of ver. 10,—"after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass—yea, Thou our God hast spared us more than our iniquity deserved, and hast given us this escaped remnant—can we again break Thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? Wilt Thou not be angry with us even to extirpation, so that no residue and no escaped remnant should be left?" The premiss in ver. 13*a* is followed in ver. 14 by the conclusion in the form of a question, while the second clause of ver. 13 is an explanatory parenthesis. Bertheau construes the passage otherwise. He finds the continuation of the sentence: and after all this . . . in the words כִּי אַתָּה וגו׳, which, calmly spoken, would read: Thou, O God, hast not wholly destroyed us, but hast preserved to us an escaped remnant; while instead of such a continuation we have an exclamation of grateful wonder,

ing to the just remark of Bertheau, entirely refuted even by the fact that the words cited are nowhere found in the Pentateuch in this exact form, and that hence Ezra did not intend to make a verbal quotation.

emphatically introduced by כִּי in the sense of אָמְנָם כִּי. With this construction of the clauses, however, no advance is made, and Ezra, in this prayer, does but repeat what he had already said, vers. 8 and 9; although the introductory אַחֲרֵי leads us to expect a new thought to close the confession. Then, too, the logical connection between the question ver. 14 and what precedes it would be wanting, *i.e.* a foundation of fact for the question ver. 14. Bertheau remarks on ver. 14, that the question: should we return to break (*i.e.* break again) the commands of God? is an antithesis to the exclamation. But neither does this question, to judge by its matter, stand in contrast to the exclamation, nor is any such contrast indicated by its form. The discourse advances in regular progression only when ver. 14*a* forms the conclusion arrived at from ver. 13*a*, and the thought in the premiss (13*a*) is limited by the thought introduced with כִּי. What had come upon Israel for their sins was, according to ver. 7, deliverance into the hand of heathen kings, to the sword, to captivity, etc. God had not, however, merely chastened and punished His people for their sins, He had also extended mercy to them, ver. 8, etc. This, therefore, is also mentioned by Ezra in ver. 13*b*, to justify, or rather to limit, the כֹּל in כְּכָל־הַבָּא. The כִּי is properly confirmatory: for Thou, our God, hast indeed punished us, but not in such measure as our sins had deserved; and receives through the tenor of the clause the adversative meaning of *imo*, yea (comp. Ewald, § 330, *b*). חָשַׂכְתָּ לְמִטָּה מ', Thou hast checked, hast stopped, beneath our iniquities. חָשַׂךְ is not used intransitively, but actively; the missing object must be supplied from the context: Thou hast withheld that, all of which should have come upon us, *i.e.* the punishment we deserved, or, as older expositors completed the sense, *iram tuam*. לְמִטָּה מֵעֲוֹנֵנוּ, *infra delicta nostra*, *i.e.* Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserved. For their iniquities they had merited extirpation; but God had given them a rescued remnant. כָּזֹאת, as this, viz. this which exists in the community now returned from Babylon to Judæa. This is the circumstance which justifies

the question: should we, or can we, again (שׁוּב is used adverbially) break Thy commandments, and become related by marriage? (הִתְחַתֵּן like Deut. vii. 3.) עַמֵּי הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת, people who live in abominations. The answer to this question is found in the subsequent question: will He not—if, after the sparing mercy we have experienced, we again transgress the commands of God—be angry with us till He have consumed us? עַד כָּלָה (comp. 2 Kings xiii. 17, 19) is strengthened by the addition: so that there will be no remnant and no escaping. The question introduced by הֲלוֹא is an expression of certain assurance: He will most certainly consume us.—Ver. 15. "Jahve, God of Israel, Thou art righteous; for we remain an escaped remnant, as (it is) this day. Behold, we are before Thee in our trespass; for no one can stand before Thy face, because of this." Ezra appeals to the righteousness of God, not to supplicate pardon, as Neh. ix. 33, for the righteousness of God would impel Him to extirpate the sinful nation, but to rouse the conscience of the community, to point out to them what, after this relapse into their old abominations, they had to expect from the justice of God. כִּי נִשְׁאַרְנוּ is confirmatory. God has shown Himself to be just by so sorely punishing this once numerous nation, that only a small remnant which has escaped destruction now exists. And this remnant has again most grievously offended: we lie before Thee in our trespass; what can we expect from Thy justice? Nothing but destruction; for there is no standing before Thee, *i.e.* no one can stand before Thee, עַל־זֹאת, because of this (comp. viii. 23, x. 2), *i.e.* because of the fresh guilt which we have incurred.

Chap. x. *The separation of the strange wives from the congregation.*—Vers. 1–5. While Ezra was making this confession before God, a numerous assemblage gathered around him, and wept aloud. From this point onwards Ezra relates the further course of events in such wise as to cast his own person in the background, and speaks of himself in the third person. The matter of his prayer is more definitely declared by וְכִהְתְוַדּוֹתוֹ, and his posture in prayer by בֹּכֶה וּמִתְנַפֵּל, weeping and casting himself down (lying on his knees, ix. 5).

"Before the house of God," *i.e.* in the court of the temple. The confirmatory clause: for the people wept much (הָרְבֵּה בְכָה, a weeping in mass), furnishes the motive of so great a number of men, women, and children gathering around Ezra. Very many were as distressed as he was at the marriages with strange wives, and regarded them as a grievous trespass; hence they assembled weeping around him.—Ver. 2, etc. Then one of the sons of Elam, Shecaniah, the son of Jehiel, stood forth from amidst the assembly, and uttered the confession: "We have been unfaithful towards our God by marrying strange wives, but there is yet hope for Israel concerning this thing. We will now make a covenant with God to put away all the strange wives and their children from the congregation, according to the counsel of the Lord, and of those who fear the commandment of our God, that it may be done according to the law." Shecaniah, of the sons of Elam (comp. ii. 7, viii. 7), is a different person from the descendant of Zattu, mentioned chap. viii. 5; nor is Jehiel identical with the individual whose name occurs in ver. 26. וַנֹּשֶׁב, and have brought home strange wives. הוֹשִׁיב, to cause to dwell (in one's house), said in vers. 10, 14, 17, 18, and Neh. xiii. 23, 27, of bringing a wife home. Shecaniah founds his hope for Israel in this trespass upon the circumstance, that they bind themselves by a solemn covenant before God to put away this scandal from the congregation, and to act in conformity with the law. To make a covenant with our God, *i.e.* to bind themselves by an oath with respect to God, comp. 2 Chron. xxix. 10. הוֹצִיא, to put away —the opposite of הוֹשִׁיב. All the wives are, according to the context, all the strange women (ver. 2), and that which is born of them, their children. Instead of בַּעֲצַת אֲדֹנָי, according to the counsel of the Lord, De Wette, Bertheau, and others, following the paraphrase in the LXX. and 1 Esdras, read אֲדֹנִי, according to the counsel of my lord, *i.e.* of Ezra. But this paraphrase being of no critical authority, there is no sufficient reason for the alteration. For Shecaniah to call Ezra my lord sounds strange, since usually this title was only given by servants to their master, or subjects to their sove-

reign, and Shecaniah afterwards addresses him simply as *thou*. Besides, Ezra had given no advice at all in this matter, and still less had he come to any resolution about it with the God-fearing members of the community. יֵעָשֶׂה after the preceding נִכְרֹת־בְּרִית, we will make a covenant, must be taken as hortative: and let it be done according to the law. חָרֵד בְּ, caring for with trembling.—Ver. 4. "Up! for this matter concerns thee (thou art called to carry it out), and we are with thee (will assist thee therein); be strong (courageous) and do it."—Ver. 5. Then Ezra (who during this speech had continued upon his knees) arose, and made the chiefs of the priests, of the Levites, and of all Israel swear to do according to this word; and they swore. הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה is Shecaniah's proposal to put away the strange wives.—Ver. 6. Hereupon Ezra left the place before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib, to fast and mourn there for the unfaithfulness (transgression) of them that had been carried away (מַעַל הַגּוֹלָה like ix. 4). Johanan the son of Eliashib cannot actually be Johanan ben Eliashib (Neh. xii. 23) the high priest, however natural it may be to understand by the chamber of Johanan one of the chambers in the out-buildings of the temple, called after the name of some well-known individual. For the high priest Eliashib was a contemporary of Nehemiah, and the high priest Johanan was not the son, but, according to the definite statement, Neh. xii. 10, the grandson, of Eliashib, and the son of Joiada (the correct reading of Neh. xii. 11 being: Joiada begat Johanan, and Jonathan). Now a chamber of the temple could not in Ezra's time have been as yet called after a grandson of Eliashib the contemporary of Nehemiah;[1] and both Johanan and Eliashib being names which frequently occur (comp. vers. 24, 27, 36), and one of the twenty-four

[1] This would not, indeed, be impossible, because, as we shall subsequently show (in our Introduction to the book of Nehemiah, § 2), Eliashib's grandson Johanan might be already ten years of age at the time of the transaction in question; so that his grandfather, the high priest Eliashib, might have called a chamber of the temple after the name of his grandson. This view is not, however, a very probable one.

orders of priests being called after the latter (1 Chron. xxiv. 12), we, with Ewald (*Gesch.* iv. p. 228), regard the Johanan ben Eliashib here mentioned as an individual of whom nothing further is known,—perhaps a priest descended from the Eliashib of 1 Chron. xxiv. 12, and who possessed in the new temple a chamber called by his name. For there is not the slightest reason to suppose, with Bertheau, that a subsequent name of this chamber is used in this narrative, because the narrator desired to state the locality in a manner which should be intelligible to his contemporaries. Cler. and Berth. desire, after 1 Esdr. ix. 1 (*καὶ αὐλισθεὶς ἐκεῖ*), to change וַיָּלֶן שָׁם into וַיָּלֶן שָׁם: and he passed the night there without eating bread or drinking water. But the LXX. having *καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἐκεῖ*, and the repetition of the same word being, moreover, by no means infrequent, comp. *e.g.* וַיָּקָם in vers. 5, 6, and finally שָׁם repeatedly standing for thither, *e.g.* 1 Sam. ii. 14 (הַבָּאִים שָׁם), there are no adequate grounds for an alteration of the text. The paraphrase of 1 Esdr. arises merely from the connection, and is devoid of critical value. To eat no bread, etc., means to fast: comp. Ex. xxxiv. 28, Deut. ix. 9.

Vers. 7–17. The resolution carried into execution.—Vers. 7, 8. A proclamation was sent forth throughout Judah and Jerusalem (הַעֲבִיר קוֹל, comp. i. 1) to all the children of the captivity to assemble at Jerusalem under pain of the punishment, that whoever should not come within three days, all his substance should be forfeited and himself excluded from the congregation, according to the decision of the princes and elders, who, as the heads of the community, had taken the matter in hand, and made this announcement. The forfeiture of substance is not its destruction, as prescribed Deut. xiii. 13–17 in the case of a city fallen into idolatry, but its appropriation to the benefit of the temple, after the analogy of Lev. xxvii. 28.—Ver. 9. After three days all the men of Judah and Benjamin assembled at Jerusalem. This took place on the twentieth day of the ninth month. On this statement of time, see the remark on ix. 1. The assembled multitude sat there on the open space of the house of God,

i.e. probably the open space (הָרְחוֹב) in front of the water-gate, Neh. viii. 1, 3, 16, at the eastern or south-eastern side, before the temple court; see remarks on Neh. viii. 1. "Trembling" because of this matter, the seriousness of which they might perceive from the heavy penalty attached to their non-appearance within three days, and "because of the rain." The ninth month, corresponding with our December, is in the cold rainy time of the year (comp. ver. 13), "when the rain usually falls in torrents" (Robinson, *Phys. Geog.* p. 287).—Ver. 10. Ezra then stood up and reproved the assembled multitude, saying: You have brought home (הוֹשִׁיב, comp. ver. 2) strange wives to increase the trespass of Israel (comp. Ezra's confession, ix. 6–15), and exhorted them to give glory to God and to do His pleasure, (viz.) to separate themselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. On תְּנוּ תוֹדָה, comp. Josh. vii. 19. Separation from the people of the land consisted, under the circumstances, in the dismissal of the strange wives.—Ver. 12. The whole assembly replied with a loud voice, and therefore with firm resolve: According to thy word it is our duty to do. עָלֵינוּ must not be drawn to what precedes, as in the Vulgate, *juxta verbum tuum ad nos, sic fiat*, but to what follows, as in ver. 4, Neh. xiii. 13, 2 Sam. xviii. 11. But—they further remark, ver. 13—the people are many,—*i.e.* the assemblage is very large to be able to deal immediately with the several cases; and it is (now) the time of the heavy rains, and there is no power to stand without,—*i.e.* at the present season we are not able to remain in the open air until the business is discharged; neither is this the work of one day, or of two, for we have transgressed much in this matter,—*i.e.* one or two days will not suffice to investigate and decide upon all cases, because very many have broken the law in this respect.—Ver. 14. "Let then our rulers stand for the whole congregation, and let all who in all our cities have brought home strange wives come at appointed times, and with them the elders of each city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God be turned away from us, as long as this matter lasts." There were so many cases to deal with, that the rulers, as

the judicial authorities, must decide in this matter; and those who in all the cities of the land had transgressed, were to appear before these authorities, and submit their individual cases to their jurisdiction. The choice of the verb יַעַמְדוּ, to stand or set oneself to discharge some business, here therefore to give judgment, is occasioned by the preceding לַעֲמוֹד. The whole community had assembled according to the proclamation, and was standing there for the purpose of bringing the matter to a close. This they were not, however, able to do, for the reasons stated ver. 13; hence the princes, as rulers of the community, are to remain for the discharge of the business. לְכָל־הַקָּהָל is not a genitive dependent on שָׂרֵינוּ, and explanatory of the suffix of this word—our, viz. the whole congregation's, princes (Bertheau)—an unnatural and superfluous elucidation; for if the whole congregation say: our princes, it is self-evident that not the princes of a section or portion of the people, but of the whole congregation, must be intended. לְכָל־הַקָּהָל is the object of יַעַמְדוּ: let them stand for the whole congregation (לְ עָמַד like לְ קוּם, Ps. xciv. 16), not *instead of*, but for the good of the congregation, and transact *its* business. In our cities, *i.e.* including the capital, for there is here no contrast between Jerusalem and the other cities. The article to הַהֹשִׁיב stands, as is often the case, for the relative אֲשֶׁר, *e.g.* ver. 17, viii. 25. עִתִּים מְזֻמָּנִים, appointed times, stated terms, used only here and in Neh. x. 35, xiii. 31. זְמַן is a Chaldaistic expression. With the accused were to come the elders and judges of every city, to furnish the necessary explanations and evidence. עַד לְהָשִׁיב, until the turning away of the fierceness of the wrath (עַד לְ according to the later usage of the language instead of עַד only, comp. Ewald, § 315, *a*, not instead of לְ only, as Bertheau seeks, by incorrectly interpreted passages, to prove). The meaning is: until the fierce wrath of God concerning these marriages shall be turned away, by their dissolution and the dismissal of the strange women from the congregation. The last words, עַד לַדָּבָר הַזֶּה, offer some difficulty. De Wette and Bertheau translate them: on account of this matter, which עַד לְ can by no means signify. We regard עַד לְ = עַד of the older

language, in the sense of during, like 2 Kings ix. 22, according to which the meaning is: as long as this thing lasts; but we connect these words, not, as J. H. Michaelis, with the immediately preceding clause: the wrath which is fierce during this matter (*quæ usque, i.e. constanter ardet*), but take them as more exactly defining the leading idea of the verse: the princes are to stand and judge the guilty as long as this matter lasts, so that עַד לְדָבָר הַזֶּה is co-ordinate with עַד לְהָשִׁיב וגו׳.—Ver. 15. Jonathan the son of Asahel, and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah, indeed opposed this proposal on the part of the community, and were supported in their opposition by two Levites, but without being able to carry it out. This statement is introduced by אַךְ, *only*, in the form of a qualification to the remark that the *whole* assembly (ver. 12) made this resolution: nevertheless Jonathan . . . stood up against this. For עָמַד עַל, to stand up against, or as elsewhere קוּם עַל, comp. 1 Chron. xxi. 1, 2 Chron. xx. 23, Dan. viii. 25, xi. 14. Such also is the view of R. Sal. and Lightf., while older expositors understand it as meaning: only Jonathan . . . stood up for this matter, like the *steterunt super hoc* of the Vulgate, or as the decidedly incorrect explanation of J. H. Mich.: *præfecti sunt huic negotio*.—Nothing further is known of the four opponents here named. That they did not succeed in this opposition appears from what follows. Ver. 16. The children of the captivity, *i.e.* the returned exiles, did so; *i.e.* the congregation carried their resolve into execution. And Ezra the priest, and men, heads of houses according to their houses,—*i.e.* so that each house was represented by its head,—were separated, *i.e.* chosen to conduct the investigation. The ו copulative before אֲנָשִׁים has been lost, an asyndeton seeming in this case inadmissible. Bertheau, on the contrary, unnecessarily changes וַיִּבָּדְלוּ into וַיַּבְדֵּל לוֹ after 1 Esdras ix. 16. "And they all by names," comp. viii. 20. וַיֵּשְׁבוּ, and they held a sitting (*i.e.* their first sitting) on the first day of the tenth month, and therefore only ten days after the assembly just spoken of. לִדְרוֹשׁ הַדָּבָר, to inquire into the matter. It is impossible in Hebrew to form דְּרִישׁ from דָּרַשׁ, and this word can only arise from דִּרוּשׁ, as Ewald,

§ 239, *a*, note, Olshausen, *Lehrb. d. hebr. Spr.* p. 150, and Böttcher, *ausf. Lehrb. der hebr. Spr.* i. 1, p. 162, note, unanimously agree.—Ver. 17. And they made an end with all, with respect to the men who had brought home strange wives. בַּכֹּל (with the article) cannot be so connected with אֲנָשִׁים, from which it is separated by the accentuation of the latter, as to admit of the repetition, as by older expositors, of the preposition בְּ before אֲנָשִׁים: with all, namely, with the men. Still less can בַּכֹּל, as Bertheau thinks, be taken in the sense of "in every place," and אֲנָשִׁים connected as an accusative with וַיְכַלּוּ: they finished in every place the men (!); for כָּלָה with an accusative of the person signifies to annihilate, to make an end of, while כָּלָה בְ means to finish, to make an end with, comp. Gen. xliv. 12. If, as the accentuation requires, we take בַּכֹּל independently, אֲנָשִׁים can only be an accusative of more exact definition: in respect of the men (אֲנָשִׁים being without the article, because words which define it follow). As this gives a suitable meaning, it seems unnecessary to alter the punctuation and read בְּכָל־אֲנָשִׁים, or with Ewald, § 290, *c*, note 1, to regard בַּכֹּל אֲנָשִׁים as a singular combination.—Till the first day of the first month (of the next year), therefore in three months, their sittings having begun, according to ver. 13, on the first day of the tenth month.—The account of this transaction closes with—

The list of the men who had taken strange wives, vers. 18–44; among whom were priests (18–22), Levites (23, 24), and Israelites, *i.e.* laymen (25–43).—Ver. 18, etc. Among the priests there stand first, four names of sons and brethren of the high priest Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. אֶחָיו, his (Jeshua's) brethren. Judging by ii. 36, these were among the descendants of Jedaiah, a section of the house of the high-priestly family (see rem. on ii. 36), and were therefore distant cousins of the high priest. They gave their hands, *i.e.* bound themselves by shaking hands, to put away their wives, *i.e.* to dismiss them, and to sever them from the congregation of Israel, וְאַשְׁמֵם, "and guilty a ram for their trespass," *i.e.* condemned to bring a ram as a trespass-offer-

ing. וַאֲשֵׁמִים is to be regarded as the continuation of the infinitive clause לְהוֹצִיא. As elsewhere, infinitive clauses are continued without anything further in the *verb. finit.* (comp. Ewald, § 350); so here also does the adjective אֲשֵׁמִים follow, requiring that לִהְיוֹת should be mentally supplied. אֵיל־צֹאן, a ram of the flock, is, as an accusative of more exact definition, dependent on אֲשֵׁמִים. This trespass-offering was imposed upon them according to the principle of the law, Lev. v. 14, etc., because they had committed a מַעַל against the Lord, which needed expiation; see on Lev. v. 14.—In what follows, only the names of the individuals, and a statement of the families they belonged to, are given, without repeating that the same obligations, namely, the dismissal of their strange wives, and the bringing of a trespass-offering, were imposed on them also, this being self-evident from the context.—Among the sons of Immer were three, among the sons of Harim five, among the sons of Pashur six offenders; in all, eighteen priests. By comparing ii. 36–39, we perceive that not one of the orders of priests who returned with Zerubbabel was free from participation in this transgression. Some of the names given, 20–22, reappear in the lists in Neh. viii. 4 and x. 2–9, and may belong to the same individuals.—Ver. 23. Of Levites, only six names are given, and that without stating the houses to which they belonged. From ii. 40, however, it appears that they were of the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel there mentioned. "Kelaiah, the same is Kelita;" the latter is the usual name of the person in question, and that which he bears in Neh. viii. 7 and x. 11. Jozabad also reappears in Neh. viii. 7.—Ver. 24, etc. Of singers one, and of porters three names are given; comp. ii. 41, 42. In all, ten Levites. —Ver. 25. Of Israel, as distinguished from priests and Levites, *i.e.* of the laity. Of these latter are given in all eighty-six names, belonging to ten races, 25–43, who returned with Zerubbabel. See Nos. 1, 5, 6, 9, 8, 4, 30, 17, and 27 of the survey of these races, p. 33. יְרֵמוֹת in ver. 29 should, according to the Chethiv, be read יְרֵמוֹת.—The twofold naming of sons of Bani in this list (vers. 29 and 34)

is strange, and Bani is evidently in one of these places a mistake for some other name. Bertheau supposes that Bigvai may have stood in the text in one of these places. The error undoubtedly lies in the second mention of Bani (ver. 34), and consists not merely in the wrong transcription of this one name. For, while of every other race four, six, seven, or eight individuals are named, no less than seven and twenty names follow מִבְּנֵי בָנִי, though all these persons could hardly have belonged to one race, unless the greater number of males therein had married strange wives. Besides, no names of inhabitants of cities of Judah and Benjamin are given in this list (as in ii. 21–28, and 33–35), although it is stated in vers. 7 and 14 that not only the men of Jerusalem, but also dwellers in other cities, had contracted these prohibited marriages, and been summoned to Jerusalem, that judgment might be pronounced in their several cases. These reasons make it probable that the twenty-seven persons enumerated in vers. 34–42 were inhabitants of various localities in Judah, and not merely individuals belonging to a single house. This supposition cannot, however, be further corroborated, since even the LXX. and 1 Esdr. read the name Bani in vers. 27 and 34, nor can any conjecture respecting the correct reading laying claim to probability be ventured on. In the single names, the Greek texts of the Septuagint and 1 Esdras frequently differ from the Hebrew text, but the differences are almost all of a kind to furnish no material for criticism. A considerable number of these names reappear in the lists of names in the book of Nehemiah, but under circumstances which nowhere make the identity of the persons bearing them certain.—Ver. 44 contains the statement with which the account of this transaction closes. The Chethiv נָשְׂאוּ seems to be an error of transcription for נָשְׂאוּ (the Keri), which the sense requires. וְיֵשׁ מֵהֶם וגו׳, "and there were among them women who had brought forth sons." מֵהֶם must be referred to women, notwithstanding the masculine suffix. יָשִׂימוּ, too, can only be referred to נָשִׁים, and cannot be explained, as by J. H. Mich.: *unde etiam filios*

susceperant seu procreaverant. The gender of the verb is adapted to the form of the word נָשִׁים, an incorrectness which must be attributed to the increasing tendency of the language to use the masculine instead of the feminine, or to renounce a distinction of form between the genders. There are no adequate reasons for such an alteration of the text as Bertheau proposes; for the LXX. already had our text before them, and the καὶ ἀπέλυσαν αὐτὰς σὺν τέκνοις of 1 Esdr. ix. 36 is a mere conjecture from the context. The remark itself, that among the women who were sent away were some who had already brought children into the world, is not superfluous, but added for the purpose of showing how thoroughly this matter was carried out. Separation from women who already have children is far more grievous, *ob communium liberorum caritatem*, than parting with childless wives.

Strictly as this separation was carried out, this evil was not thereby done away with for ever, nor even for very long. After the arrival of Nehemiah at Jerusalem, when the building of the wall was concluded, the congregation again bound themselves by an oath, on the occasion of a day of prayer and fasting, to contract no more such illegal marriages (Neh. x. 31). Nevertheless, Nehemiah, on his second return to Jerusalem, some five and twenty to thirty years after the dissolution of these marriages by Ezra, again found Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Moab, and Ammon, and children of these marriages who spoke the tongue of Ashdod, and could not speak the Jews' language, and even one of the sons of the high priest Jehoiada allied to a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite (Neh. xiii. 23, etc.). Such a phenomenon, however strange it may appear on a superficial view of the matter, becomes comprehensible when we consider more closely the circumstances of the times. The nucleus of the Israelite community in Jerusalem and Judah was formed by those exiles who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Ezra; and to this nucleus the remnant of Jewish and Israelite descent which had been left in the land was gradually united, after the rebuilding of the

temple and the restoration of the worship of Jahve. Those who returned from Babylon, as well as those who remained in the land, had now, however, lived seventy, and some of them one hundred and fifty, years (from the captivity of Jehoiachin in 599, to the return of Ezra in 457) among the heathen, and in the midst of heathen surroundings, and had thus become so accustomed to intercourse with them in civil and social transactions, that the consciousness of the barriers placed by the Mosaic law between Israel, the people of Jahve, and the Gentiles, was more and more obliterated. And this would especially be the case when the Gentiles who entered into matrimonial alliance with Israelites did not flagrantly practise idolatrous worship, *i.e.* did not offer sacrifice to heathen deities. Under such circumstances, it must have been extremely difficult to do away entirely with these unlawful unions; although, without a thorough reform in this respect, the successful development of the new community in the land of their fathers was not to be obtained.

Ezra's narrative of his agency in Jerusalem closes with the account of the dissolution of the unlawful marriages then existing. What he subsequently effected for the revival of religion and morality in the re-established community, in conformity with the law of God, was more of an inward and spiritual kind; and was either of such a nature that no striking results ensued, which could furnish matter for historical narrative, or was performed during the period of his joint agency with Nehemiah, of which an account is furnished by the latter in the record he has handed down to us (Neh. viii. 10).

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

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INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. CONTENTS, DIVISION, AND OBJECT OF THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

HIS book, according to its title, contains דִּבְרֵי נְחֶמְיָה, and in it Nehemiah relates, almost always in the first person, his journey to Jerusalem, and the work which he there effected. דִּבְרֵי נְחֶמְיָה, used as the title of a work, signifies not narratives, but deeds and experiences, and consequently here the history of Nehemiah. Apart from the contents of the book, this title might, in conformity with the twofold meaning of דְּבָרִים, *verba* and *res*, designate both the words or discourses and the acts or undertakings of Nehemiah. But דִּבְרֵי means words, discourses, only in the titles of prophetical or didactic books, *i.e.* writings of men whose vocation was the announcement of the word: comp. *e.g.* Jer. i. 1, Hos. i. 1, and others. In historical writings, on the contrary, the דִּבְרֵי of the men whose lives and acts are described, are their deeds and experiences: thus דִּבְרֵי דָוִיד, 1 Chron. xxix. 29; דִּבְרֵי שְׁלֹמֹה, written עַל סֵפֶר דִּבְרֵי שְׁלֹמֹה 1 Kings xi. 41, comp. 2 Chron. ix. 29,—the history of David, of Solomon; דִּבְרֵי יָרָבְעָם, 1 Kings xiv. 19, the acts of Jeroboam, which are more exactly defined by the addition אֲשֶׁר נִלְחַם וַאֲשֶׁר מָלַךְ. So, too, in the case of the other kings, when reference is made to historical works concerning their reigns. It is in this sense that the title of the present book must be understood; and hence both Luther and de Wette have correctly translated it: the history of Nehemiah. Hence the title only testifies to

the fact, that the work at the head of which it stands treats of the things, *i.e.* of the acts, of Nehemiah, and the events that happened to him, without stating anything concerning its author. That Nehemiah was himself the historian of his own deeds, appears only from the circumstance that the narrative is written in the first person.

The *contents* of the book are as follows: Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah, a Jew, of whom nothing further is known, and cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes Longimanus, is plunged into deep affliction by the account he receives from his brother Hanani, and certain other men from Judah, of the sad condition of those who had returned from Babylon, and especially of the state of the ruined walls and gates of Jerusalem. He entreats with fervent supplications the mercy of God (chap. i.), and shortly after seizes a favourable opportunity to request the king to send him to Judah to build the city of his fathers' sepulchres, and to give him letters to the governors on the other side of Euphrates, that they may provide him with wood for building from the royal forests. This petition being graciously acceded to by the monarch, he travels, accompanied by captains of forces and horsemen, to Jerusalem, and soon after his arrival rides by night round the city, accompanied by some few companions, to ascertain the state of the walls. He then communicates to the rulers of the people his resolution to build and restore the walls, and invites them to undertake this work with him (chap. ii.). Then follows in chap. iii. 1–32 a list of the individuals and families who built the several portions of the wall with their gates; and in chap. iii. 33–vi. 19, an account of the difficulties Nehemiah had to overcome in the prosecution of the work, viz.: (1) the attempts of the enemies of the Jews forcibly to oppose and hinder the building, by reason of which the builders were obliged to work with weapons in their hands (iii. 33–iv. 17); (2) the oppression of the poorer members of the community by wealthy usurers, which Nehemiah put a stop to by seriously reproving their injustice, and by his own great unselfishness (chap. v.); and (3) the plots made against his life by his enemies, which he frustrated

by the courageous faith with which he encountered them. Thus the building of the wall was, notwithstanding all these difficulties, brought to a successful termination (chap. vi.).— This work accomplished, Nehemiah directed his efforts towards securing the city against hostile attacks by appointing watches at the gates (vii. 1–3), and increasing the numbers of the dwellers in Jerusalem; in pursuance of which design, he assembled the nobles and people for the purpose of enrolling their names according to their genealogy (vii. 4, 5). While occupied with this matter, he found a list of those houses of Judah that had returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua; and this he gives, vii. 6–73. Then, on the approach of the seventh month of the year, the people assembled at Jerusalem to hear the public reading of the law by Ezra, to keep the new moon and the feast of this month, and, after the celebration of the feast of tabernacles, to observe a day of prayer and fasting, on which occasion the Levites making confession of sin in the name of the congregation, they renewed their covenant with God by entering into an oath to keep the law. This covenant being committed to writing, was sealed by Nehemiah as governor, by the chiefs of the priests, of the Levites, and of the houses of the people, and the contributions for the support of the worship of God and its ministers arranged (viii.–x.). The decision arrived at concerning the increase of the inhabitants of Jerusalem was next carried into execution, one of every ten dwellers in the provinces being chosen by lot to go to Jerusalem and dwell there (xi. 1, 2). Then follow lists, (1) of the houses and races who dwelt in Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah and Benjamin (xi. 3–36); (2) of the priestly and Levitical families who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua, and of the heads of priestly and Levitical families in the days of Joiakim the high priest, Nehemiah, and Ezra (xii. 1–26). These are succeeded by an account of the solemn dedication of the walls (xii. 27–43). Then, finally, after some general remarks on certain institutions of divine worship, and an account of a public reading of the law (xii. 44–xiii. 3), the book concludes with a brief

narration of what Nehemiah effected during his second sojourn there, after his journey to the court in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, and his return for the purpose of putting a stop to certain illegal acts which had prevailed during his absence, such as marriages with heathen women, non-payment of tithes and dues to Levites, desecration of the Sabbath by field-labour, and by buying and selling (xiii. 4–31).

According to what has been stated, this book may be divided into three sections. The first, chaps. i.–vi., treats of the building of the walls and gates of Jerusalem through the instrumentality of Nehemiah; the narrative concerning the occasion of his journey, and the account of the journey itself (i. 1–ii. 10), forming the introduction. The second, chaps. vii.–xii. 43, furnishes a description of the further efforts of Nehemiah to increase and ensure the prosperity of the community in Judah and Jerusalem, first, by securing Jerusalem from hostile attacks; then, by seeking to increase the population of the city; and, lastly, by endeavouring to bring the domestic and civil life of the people into conformity with the precepts of the law, and thus to furnish the necessary moral and religious basis for the due development of the covenant people. The third, chap. xii. 44–xiii. 31, states how Nehemiah, during his second sojourn at Jerusalem, continued these efforts for the purpose of ensuring the permanence of the reform which had been undertaken.

The aim of Nehemiah's proceedings was to place the civil prosperity of the Israelites, now returned from exile to the land of their fathers, on a firm basis. Briefly to describe what he effected, at one time by direct personal effort, at another in conjunction with his contemporary Ezra the priest and scribe, is the *object* of his record. As Nehemiah's efforts for the civil welfare of his people as the congregation of the Lord were but a continuation of those by which Zerubbabel the prince, Joshua the high priest, and Ezra the scribe had effected the foundation of the community of returned exiles, so too does his book form the continuation and completion of that of Ezra, and may in this respect be

regarded as its second part. It is, moreover, not merely similar in kind, to the book of Ezra, especially with regard to the insertion of historical and statistical lists and genealogical registries, but has also the same historical object, viz. to show how the people of Israel, after their return from the Babylonian captivity, were by the instrumentality of Nehemiah fully re-established in the land of promise as the congregation of the Lord.

§ 2. INTEGRITY OF THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH, AND DATE OF ITS COMPOSITION.

Nehemiah gives his account of the greater part of his labours for the good of his fellow-countrymen in the first person; and this form of narrative is not only uniformly maintained throughout the first six chapters (from i. 1–vii. 5), but also recurs in chap. xii. 27–43, and from xiii. 6 to the end. The formula too: Think upon me, my God, etc., peculiar to Nehemiah, is repeated v. 19, vi. 14, xiii. 14, 22, 29, 31. Hence not only has the composition of the larger portion of this book been universally admitted to be the work of Nehemiah, but the integrity of its first section (i.–vi.) has been generally acknowledged. On the composition and authorship of the second section, vii. 73*b*–xii. 26, on the contrary, the verdict of modern criticism is almost unanimous in pronouncing it not to have been the work of Nehemiah, but composed from various older documents and records by the compiler of the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah—the so-called chronicler who lived a hundred years later—and by him interpolated in "the record of Nehemiah." This view has been chiefly based upon the facts, that in chaps. viii.–x. the style is different; that Nehemiah himself is not the prominent person, Ezra occupying the foreground, and Nehemiah being merely the subject of a passing remark (viii. 9 and x. 2); that there is in viii. 14 no reference to Ezra iii. 4 with respect to the feast of tabernacles; and that Ezra iii. 1 is in verbal accordance with Neh. viii. 1 (Bertheau, *Comm.* p. 11, and de Wette-Schrader,

Einl. in das A. T. § 236). Of these reasons, the first (the dissimilarity of style) is an assertion arising from a superficial examination of these chapters, and in support of which nothing further is adduced than that, instead of *Elohim*, and especially the God of heaven, elsewhere current with Nehemiah when speaking of God, the names *Jehovah*, *Adonai*, and *Elohim* are in this section used promiscuously. In fact, however, the name *Elohim* is chiefly used even in these chapters, and *Jahve* but seldom; while in the prayer chap. ix. especially, such other appellations of God occur as Nehemiah, with the solemnity befitting the language of supplication, uses also in the prayer in chap. i.[1] The other three reasons are indeed correct, in so far as they are actual facts, but they prove nothing. It is true that in chap. viii.–x. Nehemiah personally occupies a less prominent position than Ezra, but this is because the actions therein related, viz. the public reading of the law, and the direction of the sacred festivals, belonged not to the office of Nehemiah the Tirshatha and royal governor, but to that of Ezra the scribe, and to the priests and Levites. Even here, however, Nehemiah, as the royal Tirshatha, stands at the head of the assembled people, encourages them in conjunction with Ezra and the priests, and is the first, as *præcipuum membrum ecclesiæ* (x. 2), to seal the document of the covenant just concluded. Again, though it is certain that in the description of the feast of tabernacles, viii. 14 sq., there is no express allusion to its former celebration under Zerubbabel and Joshua, Ezra iii. 4, yet such allusions are unusual with biblical writers in general. This is shown, *e.g.*, by a comparison of 2 Chron. xxxv. 1, 18 with 2 Chron. xxx. 1, 13–26; and yet it has never struck any critic that an argument against the single authorship of 2 Chron. might be found in the fact that no allusion to the earlier passover held under Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxx., is made in the description of the passover under Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxv. Finally, the

[1] Compare the exact statement of the case in my *Lehrbuch*, § 149, note 4, which opponents have ignored, because nothing in the way of facts can be brought against it.

verbal coincidence of chap. viii. 1 (properly vii. 73*b* and viii. 1) with Ezra iii. 1 amounts to the statement that "when the seventh month was come, all Israel gathered out of their cities as one man to Jerusalem." All else is totally different; the assembly in Neh. viii. pursues entirely different objects and undertakes entirely different matters from that in Ezra iii. The peculiarities, moreover, of Nehemiah's style could as little appear in what is narrated, chaps. viii.–x., as in his description of the building of the wall, iii. 1–32, or in the list of the families who returned from captivity with Zerubbabel and Joshua, chap. vii.—portions which no one has yet seriously objected to as integral parts of the book of Nehemiah. The same remark applies to the list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the province, xi. 3–36, which even Bertheau and Schrader admit to have originated from the record of Nehemiah, or to have been composed by Nehemiah. If, however, Nehemiah composed these lists, or incorporated them in his record, why should it not also be himself, and not the "subsequent chronicler," who inserted in his work the lists of priests and Levites, xii. 1–26, when the description of the dedication of the wall which immediately follows them is evidently his own composition?

One reason for maintaining that these lists of priests and Levites are of later origin than the times of Nehemiah is said to be, that they extend to Jaddua the high priest, who was contemporary with Alexander the Great. If this assertion were as certain as it is confidently brought forward, then indeed these lists might well be regarded as a subsequent interpolation in the book of Nehemiah. For Nehemiah, who was at least thirty years of age when he first came to Jerusalem, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, *i.e.* B.C. 445, could hardly have lived to witness the overthrow of the Persian monarchy by Alexander, B.C. 330; or, even if he did attain the age of 145, would not have postponed the writing of his book to the last years of his life. When, however, we consider somewhat more closely the priests and Levites in question, we shall perceive that vers. 1–9 of

chap. xii. contain a list of the chiefs of the priests and Levites who returned from captivity with Zerubbabel and Joshua, which consequently descends from the times before Nehemiah; vers. 12–21, a list of the heads of the priestly houses in the days of the high priest Joiakim, the son of Joshua; and vers. 24 and 25, a list of the heads or chiefs of Levi (of the Levites), with the closing remark, ver. 26: "These were in the days of Joiakim the son of Joshua, and in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra." Now the high priest Joiakim, the son of Joshua, the contemporary of Zerubbabel, was the predecessor and father of the high priest Eliashib, the contemporary of Nehemiah. Consequently both these lists descend from the time previous to Nehemiah's arrival at Jerusalem; and the mention of Ezra and Nehemiah along with Joiakim proves nothing more than that the chiefs of the Levites mentioned in the last list were still living in the days of Nehemiah. Thus these three lists contain absolutely nothing which reaches to a period subsequent to Nehemiah. Between the first and second, however, there stands (vers. 10 and 11) the genealogical notice: Joshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim begat Eliashib, Eliashib begat Jonathan (correct reading, Johanan), and Jonathan begat Jaddua; and between the second and third it is said, ver. 22: With respect to the Levites, in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, the heads of houses are recorded, and the priests under the reign of Darius the Persian; and ver. 23: With respect to the sons of Levi, the heads of houses are recorded in the book of the Chronicles even to the days of Johanan. From these verses (10, 11, and 22, 23) it is inferred that the lists descend to the time of the high-priesthood of Jaddua, the contemporary of Alexander the Great. To this we reply, that viewing the circumstance that Eliashib was high priest in the time of Nehemiah (iii. 1, xiii. 4, 7), it cannot be an absolute objection that Jaddua was still living in the days of Alexander the Great, since from the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, *i.e.* from B.C. 433, to the destruction of the Persian empire B.C. 330, there are only 103

years, a period for which three high priests, each exercising his office thirty-five years, would suffice. But on the other hand, it is very questionable whether in vers. 11 and 12 Jaddua is mentioned as the officiating high priest, or only as the son of Johanan, and grandson of Joiada the high priest. The former of these views receives no corroboration from ver. 11, for there nothing else is given but the genealogy of the high-priestly line. Nor can it any more be proved from ver. 22 that the words, "in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, were the Levites recorded or enrolled," are to be understood of four different lists made under four successive high priests. The most natural sense of the words, on the contrary, is that *one* enrolment took place in the days of these four individuals of the high-priestly house. If Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua were all alive at the same time, this, the most natural view, must also be the correct one, because in each of the other lists of the same chapter, the times of only one high priest are mentioned, and at the close of the list, ver. 26, it is expressly stated that the (previously enrolled) Levites were chiefs in the days of Joiakim, Ezra, and Nehemiah. It is not, moreover, difficult to prove that Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua were living contemporaneously. For Eliashib, whom Nehemiah found high priest at his arrival at Jerusalem (iii. 1), being the grandson of Joshua, who returned from Babylon in the year 536 with Zerubbabel, would in 445 be anything but a young man. Indeed, he must then have been about seventy-five years old. Moreover, it appears from xiii. 4 and 7, that in 433, when Nehemiah returned to Artaxerxes, he was still in office, though on Nehemiah's return he was no longer alive, and that he therefore died soon after 433, at the age of about ninety. If, however, this was his age when he died, his son Joiada might then be already sixty-three, his grandson Johanan thirty-six, his great-grandson Jaddua nine, if each were respectively born in the twenty-seventh year of his father's lifetime.[1]

[1] If Jaddua were on the death of his great-great-grandfather (between

The view (of vers. 11, 12, and 22) just stated, is confirmed both by vers. 22*b* and 23, and by chap. xiii. 28. According to 22*b*, the chiefs or heads of the priestly houses were enrolled under the government of Darius the Persian. Now there is no doubt that this Darius is Darius Nothus, the successor of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who reigned from 424 to 404. The notion that Darius Codomanus is intended, rests upon the mistaken view that in ver. 11 Jaddua is mentioned as the high priest already in office. According to ver. 23, the heads of the houses of the Levites were enrolled in the book of the Chronicles even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliáshib. The days of Johanan—that is, the period of his high-priesthood—are here named as the latest date to which the author of this book extends the genealogical lists of the Levites. And this well agrees with the information, chap. xiii. 18, that during Nehemiah's absence at Jerusalem, one of the sons of Joiada the high priest allied himself by marriage with Sanballat the Horonite, *i.e.* married one of his daughters, and was driven away by Nehemiah. If Joiada had even in the days of Nehemiah a married son, Johanan the first-born son of Joiada, the presumptive successor to the high-priesthood, might well have been at that time so long a married man as to have already witnessed the birth of his son Jaddua.

To complete our proof that the contents of chap. xii. do not extend to a period subsequent to Nehemiah, we have still to discuss the question, how long he held office in Judæa, and when he wrote the book in which he relates what he there effected. Both these questions can be answered with sufficient accuracy for our purpose, though the exact year cannot be named. Concerning the time he held office in Jerusalem, he only remarks in his book that he was governor from the

433 and 430 B.C.) about ten years old, he might also live to witness the appearance of Alexander the Great before Jerusalem, 330 B.C. (mentioned by Josephus, *Ant.* xi. 8. 4), since he would then have attained the age of 110, which does not seem incredible, when it is considered that Jehoiada, the high priest in the reign of Joash, was 130 when he died (2 Chron. xxiv. 15).

twentieth to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, and that in the thirty-second year of that monarch he again returned to the court, and afterwards, לְקֵץ יָמִים, came back to Jerusalem (v. 14, and xiii. 6). The term לְקֵץ יָמִים is very indefinite; but the interpretation, "at the end of the year," is incorrect and unsupported. It is quite evident, from the irregularities and transgressions of the law which occurred in the community during his absence from Jerusalem, that Nehemiah must have remained longer than a year at the court, and, indeed, that he did not return for some years. Besides the withholding of the dues to the Levites (xiii. 10 sq.) and the desecration of the Sabbath (xiii. 15 sq.),—transgressions of the law which might have occurred soon after Nehemiah's departure,—Eliashib had not only the priest fitted up a chamber in the fore-court of the temple as a dwelling for his connection Tobiah (xiii. 4), but Jews had also married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab, and had children by them who spake not the Jews' language, but only that of Ashdod, in the interval (xiii. 23). These facts presuppose an absence of several years on the part of Nehemiah, even if many of these unlawful marriages had been previously contracted, and only came to his knowledge after his return.—Neither are there adequate grounds for the notion that Nehemiah lived but a short time after his return to Jerusalem. The suppression of these infringements of the law, which is narrated chap. xiii. 7–31, might, indeed, have been accomplished in a few months; but we are by no means justified in inferring that this was the last of his labours for the welfare of his fellow-countrymen, and that his own life terminated soon after, because he relates nothing more than his procedure against these transgressions. After the removal of these irregularities, and the re-establishment of legal order in divine worship and social life, he might have lived for a long period at Jerusalem without effecting anything, the record of which it might be important to hand down to posterity. If we suppose him to have been from thirty-five to forty years of age when, being cupbearer to Artaxerxes, he was sent at

his own request, in the twentieth year of that monarch's reign (445 B.C.), as governor to Judah, he might well have exercised his office in Judah and Jerusalem from thirty-five to forty years, including his journey back to the court in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, *i.e.* till 405 B.C. This would make him live till the nineteenth year of Darius Nothus, and not die till he was from seventy-five to eighty years of age. If we further suppose that he composed this book some ten years before his death, *i.e.* thirty years after his first arrival at Jerusalem, when he had, as far as lay in his power, arranged the affairs of Judah, it would then be possible for him to relate and describe all that is contained in the canonical book of Nehemiah. For in the year 415 B.C., *i.e.* in the ninth year of Darius Nothus, genealogical lists of priests and Levites of the time of Joiakim the high priest, reaching down to the days of Johanan the son (grandson) of Eliashib, and of the time of the reign of Darius Nothus, might already be written in the book of the Chronicles, as mentioned xii. 23, compared with 22 and 26. Then, too, the high priest Joiada might already have been dead, his son Johanan have succeeded to the office, and Jaddua, the son of the latter, have already attained the age of twenty-five.—This book would consequently contain no historical information and no single remark which Nehemiah might not himself have written. Hence the contents of the book itself furnish not the slightest opposition to the view that the whole was the work of Nehemiah.

When, however, we turn our attention to its form, that unity of character to which modern criticism attaches so much importance seems to be wanting in the second half. We have, however, already remarked that neither the lack of prominence given to the person of Nehemiah, nor the circumstance that he is in these chapters spoken of in the third person, furnish incontestable arguments against the integrity of this book. For in the section concerning the dedication of the wall, xii. 27–43, Nehemiah's authorship of which no critic has as yet impugned, he only brings himself forward (31 and 38) when mentioning what he had

himself appointed and done, while the rest of the narrative is not in the communicative form of speech: we sought the Levites, we offered, etc., which he employs in the account of the making of a covenant, but in the objective form: they sought the Levites, they offered, etc. (27 and 43). The want of connection between the several sections seems to us far more striking. Chaps. viii.–x. form, indeed, a connected section, the commencement of which (vii. 73*b*) by the circumstantial clause, "when the children of Israel dwelt in their cities," combines it, even by a repetition of the very form of words, with the preceding list; but the commencement of chap. xi. is somewhat abrupt, while between xi. and xii. and between vers. 26 and 27 of chap. xii. there is nothing to mark the connection. This gives the sections, chaps. viii.–x. and xii. 1–26, the appearance of being subsequent interpolations or insertions in Nehemiah's record; and there is thus much of real foundation for this appearance, that this book is not a continuous narrative or description of Nehemiah's proceedings in Judah,—historical, topographical, and genealogical lists, which interrupt the thread of the history, being inserted in it. But it by no means follows, that because such is the nature of the book, the inserted portions must therefore have been the subsequent interpolations of another hand, in the record composed by Nehemiah. This inference of modern criticism is based upon an erroneous conception of the nature and intention of this book, which is first of all regarded, if not as a biography or diary of Nehemiah, yet as a "record," in which he noted down only the most important facts concerning his journey to Jerusalem and his proceedings there. For this preconception, neither the canonical book of Nehemiah, nor a comparison of those sections which are universally admitted to be his, furnish any adequate support. For with regard, first, to these sections, it is obvious from ver. 14, where Nehemiah during the building of the wall reproaches the usurers, saying, "From the time that I was appointed to be governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth to the two-and-thirtieth year of Artaxerxes, that is, twelve years, I and my

brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor," that Nehemiah wrote the account of his labours in Judah from memory after the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes. When we compare with this the manner in which he speaks quite incidentally (xiii. 6 sq.) of his absence from Jerusalem and his journey to the court, in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, and connects the account of the chamber vacated for Tobiah in the fore-court of the temple (xiii. 4) with the previous narrative of the public reading of the law and the severance of the strangers from Israel by the formula וְלִפְנֵי מִזֶּה, "and before this," making it appear as though this public reading of the law and severance of strangers had followed his return from the court; and further, consider that the public reading of the law mentioned, xiii. 1, is combined with the section, chap. xii. 44, and this section again (xii. 44) with the account of the dedication of the wall by the formula, "at that time;" it is undoubtedly obvious that Nehemiah did not write his whole work till the evening of his days, and after he had accomplished all that was most important in the labours he undertook for Jerusalem and his fellow-countrymen, and that he makes no decided distinction between his labours during his second sojourn at Jerusalem and those of his former stay of twelve years.

If, then, these circumstances indisputably show that the work composed by Nehemiah himself did not bear the form of a diary, the admission into it of the list of those who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua (vii. 6–73) makes it manifest that it was not his intention to give an unbroken narrative of his efforts and their results in Jerusalem. This list, moreover, which he found when occupied with his plan for increasing the population of Jerusalem, is shown by the words, "I found therein written," to have been admitted by himself into his work, and inserted in his account of what God had put it into his heart to do with respect to the peopling of Jerusalem (vii. 5), and of the manner in which he had carried out his resolution (xi. 1, 2), as a valuable document with respect to the history of the community, although the continuous thread of the

narrative was broken by the interpolation. From his admission of this list, we may infer that he also incorporated other not less important documents, such as the lists of the priests and Levites, xii. 1–26, in his book, without troubling himself about the continuous progress of the historical narrative, because it was his purpose not merely to portray his own labours in Jerusalem, but to describe the development and circumstances of the reinstated community under his own and Ezra's leadership.[1] This being the case, there can be no reason whatever for denying Nehemiah's authorship of the account of the religious solemnities in chaps. viii.–x., especially as the communicative form in which the narrative is written, bears witness that one of the leaders of that assembly of the people composed this account of it, and the expression, "we will not forsake the house of our God," with which it closes (x. 40), is a form of speech peculiar to Nehemiah, and repeated by him xiii. 11. Such considerations seem to us to do away with any doubts which may have been raised as to the integrity of the whole book, and the authorship of Nehemiah.

For the exegetical literature, see my *Lehrb.* p. 460. Comp. also Ed. Barde, *Néhémie étude critique et exegetique*, Tübing. 1861, and Bertheau's *Commentary* already quoted, p. 18.

[1] "*Néhémie*," remarks Ed. Barde in his *Etude critique et exegetique*, p. 48, "*n'écrit pas sa biographie: son but est l'histoire de la restauration de Jérusalem et du culte, pour montrer l'accomplissement des promesses de Dieu.*"

EXPOSITION.

I.—NEHEMIAH'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM, AND THE RESTORATION OF THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.—CHAP. I.-VI.

NEHEMIAH, cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes, is plunged into deep affliction by the account which he receives from certain individuals from Judah of the sad condition of his countrymen who had returned to Jerusalem and Judah. He prays with fasting to the Lord for mercy (chap. i.), and on a favourable opportunity entreats the king and queen for permission to make a journey to Jerusalem, and for the necessary authority to repair its ruined walls. His request being granted, he travels as governor to Jerusalem, provided with letters from the king, and escorted by captains of the army and horsemen (ii. 1–10). Soon after his arrival, he surveys the condition of the walls and gates, summons the rulers of the people and the priests to set about building the wall, and in spite of the obstacles he encounters from the enemies of the Jews, accomplishes this work (ii. 11–vi. 19). In describing the manner in which the building of the walls was carried on, he first enumerates in succession (iii. 1–32) the individuals and companies engaged in restoring the walls surrounding the city (iii. 1–32), and then relates the obstacles and difficulties encountered (iii. 33–vi. 19).

CHAP. I.—NEHEMIAH'S INTEREST IN AND PRAYER FOR JERUSALEM.

Vers. 1–4. In the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, being then at Susa, received from one of

his brethren, and other individuals from Judah, information which deeply grieved him, concerning the sad condition of the captives who had returned to the land of their fathers, and the state of Jerusalem. Ver. 1*a* contains the title of the whole book: the History of Nehemiah (see p. 139). By the addition "son of Hachaliah," Nehemiah is distinguished from others of the same name (*e.g.* from Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, iii. 16). Another Nehemiah, too, returned from captivity with Zerubbabel, Ezra ii. 2. Of Hachaliah we know nothing further, his name occurring but once more, x. 2, in conjunction, as here, with that of Nehemiah. Eusebius and Jerome assert that Nehemiah was of the tribe of Judah, —a statement which may be correct, but is unsupported by any evidence from the Old Testament. According to ver. 11, he was cup-bearer to the Persian king, and was, at his own request, appointed for some time Pecha, *i.e.* governor, of Judah. Comp. v. 14, xii. 26, and viii. 9, x. 2. "In the month Chisleu of the twentieth year I was in the citadel of Susa"—such is the manner in which Nehemiah commences the narrative of his labours for Jerusalem. Chisleu is the ninth month of the year, answering to our December. Comp. Zech. vii. 1, 1 Macc. iv. 52. The twentieth year is, according to chap. ii. 1, the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus. On the citadel of Susa, see further details in the remarks on Dan. viii. 2. Susa was the capital of the province Susiana, and its citadel, called by the Greeks Memnoneion, was strongly fortified. The kings of Persia were accustomed to reside here during some months of the year.—Ver. 2. There came to Nehemiah Hanani, one of his brethren, and certain men from Judah. אֶחָד מֵאַחַי, one of my brethren, might mean merely a relation of Nehemiah, אַחִים being often used of more distant relations; but since Nehemiah calls Hanani אָחִי in vii. 10, it is evident that his own brother is meant. "And I asked them concerning the Jews, and concerning Jerusalem." הַיְּהוּדִים is further defined by הַפְּלֵיטָה וגו', who had escaped, who were left from the captivity; those who had returned to Judah are intended, as contrasted with those who still remained in heathen

lands. In the answer, ver. 3, they are more precisely designated as being "there in the province (of Judah)." With respect to הַמְּדִינָה, see remarks on Ezra ii. 1. They are said to be "in great affliction (רָעָה) and in reproach." Their affliction is more nearly defined by the accessory clause which follows: and the wall = because the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates burned with fire. מְפֻרָצַת, Pual (the intensive form), broken down, does not necessarily mean that the whole wall was destroyed, but only portions, as appears from the subsequent description of the building of the wall, chap. iii.—Ver. 4. This description of the state of the returned captives plunged Nehemiah into such deep affliction, that he passed some days in mourning, fasting, and prayer. Opinions are divided with respect to the historical relation of the facts mentioned ver. 3. Some older expositors thought that Hanani could not have spoken of the destruction of the walls and gates of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, because this was already sufficiently known to Nehemiah, but of some recent demolition on the part of Samaritans and other hostile neighbours of the Jews; in opposition to which, Rambach simply replies that we are told nothing of a restoration of the wall of Jerusalem by Zerubbabel and Ezra. More recently Ewald (*Geschichte*, iv. p. 137 seq.) has endeavoured to show, from certain psalms which he transposes to post-Babylonian times, the probability of a destruction of the rebuilt wall, but gives a decided negative to the question, whether this took place during the thirteen years between the arrivals of Ezra and Nehemiah (p. 167). "For," says he, "there is not in the whole of Nehemiah's record the most distant hint that the walls had been destroyed only a short time since; but, on the contrary, this destruction was already so remote an event, that its occasion and authors were no longer spoken of." Vaihinger (*Theol. Stud. und Krit.*, 1857, p. 88, comp. 1854, p. 124 sq.) and Bertheau are of opinion that it indisputably follows from Neh. i. 3, 4, as appearances show, that the walls of Jerusalem were actually rebuilt and the gates set up before the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, and

that the destruction of this laborious work, which occasioned the sending of an embassy to the Persian court, was of quite recent occurrence, since otherwise Nehemiah would not have been so painfully affected by it. But even the very opposite opinion held concerning the impression made upon the reader by these verses, shows that appearances are deceitful, and the view that the destruction of the walls and gates was of quite recent occurrence is not implied by the words themselves, but only inserted in them by expositors. There is no kind of historical evidence that the walls of Jerusalem which had been destroyed by the Chaldeans were once more rebuilt before Nehemiah's arrival. The documents given by Ezra chap. iv. 8–22, which are in this instance appealed to, so far from proving the fact, rather bear testimony against it. The counsellor Rehum and the scribe Shimshai, in their letter to Artaxerxes, accuse indeed the Jews of building a rebellious and bad city, of restoring its walls and digging its foundations (Ezra iv. 12); but they only give the king to understand that if this city be built and its walls restored, the king will no longer have a portion on this side the river (ver. 16), and hasten to Jerusalem, as soon as they receive the king's decision, to hinder the Jews by force and power (ver. 23). Now, even if this accusation were quite well founded, nothing further can be inferred from it than that the Jews had begun to restore the walls, but were hindered in the midst of their undertaking. Nothing is said in these documents either of a rebuilding, *i.e.* a complete restoration, of the walls and setting up of the gates, or of breaking down the walls and burning the gates. It cannot be said that to build a wall means the same as pulling down a wall already built. Nor is anything said in vers. 3 and 4 of a recent demolition. The assertion, too, that the destruction of this laborious work was the occasion of the mission of Hanani and certain men of Judah to the Persian court (Vaihinger), is entirely without scriptural support. In vers. 2 and 3 it is merely said that Hanani and his companions came from Judah to Nehemiah, and that Nehemiah questioned them concerning the

condition of the Jews in the province of Judah, and concerning Jerusalem, and that they answered: The Jews there are in great affliction and reproach, for the wall of Jerusalem is broken down (מְפֻרֶצֶת is a participle expressing the state, not the præter. or perfect, which would be found here if a destruction recently effected were spoken of). Nehemiah, too, in ii. 3 and 17, only says: The city of my fathers' sepulchres (Jerusalem) lieth desolate (חָרֵבָה is an adjective), not: *has been* desolated. Nor can a visit on the part of Jews from Judah to their compatriot and relative, the king's cup-bearer, be called a mission to the Persian court.—With respect also to the deep affliction of Nehemiah, upon which Bertheau lays so much stress, it by no means proves that he had received a terrible account of some fresh calamity which had but just befallen the community at Jerusalem, and whose whole extent was as yet unknown to him. Nehemiah had not as yet been to Jerusalem, and could not from his own experience know the state of affairs in Judah and Jerusalem; hence he questioned the newly arrived visitors, not concerning the latest occurrences, but as to the general condition of the returned captives. The fact of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldees could not, of course, be unknown to him; but neither could he be ignorant that now ninety years since a great number of captives had returned to their homes with Zerubbabel and settled in Judah and Jerusalem, and that seventy years since the temple at Jerusalem had been rebuilt. Judging from these facts, he might not have imagined that the state of affairs in Judah and Jerusalem was so bad as it really was. When, then, he now learnt that those who had returned to Judah were in great affliction, that the walls of the town were still lying in ruins and its gates burned, and that it was therefore exposed defenceless to all the insults of hostile neighbours, even this information might well grieve him. It is also probable that it was through Hanani and his companions that he first learnt of the inimical epistle of the royal officials Rehum and Shimshai to Artaxerxes, and of the answer sent thereto by that

monarch, and thus became for the first time aware of the magnitude of his fellow-countrymen's difficulties. Such intelligence might well be such a shock to him as to cause the amount of distress described ver. 4. For even if he indulged the hope that the king might repeal the decree by which the rebuilding of the wall had been prohibited till further orders, he could not but perceive how difficult it would be effectually to remedy the grievous state in which his countrymen who had returned to the land of their fathers found themselves, while the disposition of their neighbours towards them was thus hostile. This state was indeed sufficiently distressing to cause deep pain to one who had a heart alive to the welfare of his nation, and there is no need for inventing new "calamities," of which history knows nothing, to account for the sorrow of Nehemiah. Finally, the circumstance that the destruction of the walls and burning of the gates are alone mentioned as proofs of the affliction and reproach which the returned exiles were suffering, arises simply from an intention to hint at the remedy about to be described in the narrative which follows, by bringing this special kind of reproach prominently forward.

Vers. 5–11. *Nehemiah's prayer*, as given in these verses, comprises the prayers which he prayed day and night, during the period of his mourning and fasting (ver. 4 comp. ver. 6), to his faithful and covenant God, to obtain mercy for his people, and the divine blessing upon his project for their assistance.—Ver. 5. The invocation of Jahve as: Thou God of heaven, alludes to God's almighty government of the world, and the further predicates of God, to His covenant faithfulness. "Thou great and terrible God" recalls Deut. vii. 21, and "who keepest covenant and mercy," etc., Deut. vii. 9 and Ex. xx. 5, 6.—Ver. 6. "Let Thine ear be attentive, and Thine eyes open," like 2 Chron. vi. 40, vii. 15—לִשְׁמֹעַ, that Thou mayest hearken to the prayer of Thy servant, which I pray, and how I confess concerning . . . מִתְוַדֶּה still depends upon אֲשֶׁר in the sense of: and what I confess concerning the sins. הַיּוֹם does not here

mean to-day, but now, at this time, as the addition "day and night" compared with יָמִים in ver. 4 shows. To strengthen the communicative form חָטָאנוּ לָךְ, and to acknowledge before God how deeply penetrated he was by the feeling of his own sin and guilt, he adds: and I and my father's house have sinned.—Ver. 7. We have dealt very corruptly against Thee. חָבֹל is the *inf. constr.* instead of the *infin. abs.*, which, before the finite verb, and by reason of its close connection therewith, becomes the *infin. constr.*, like הֱיוֹת אֶהְיֶה, Ps. l. 21; comp. Ewald, § 240, *c.* The dealing corruptly against God consists in not having kept the commandments, statutes, and judgments of the law.—Vers. 8 and 9. With his confession of grievous transgression, Nehemiah combines the petition that the Lord would be mindful of His word declared by Moses, that if His people, whom He had scattered among the heathen for their sins, should turn to Him and keep His commandments, He would gather them from all places where He had scattered them, and bring them back to the place which He had chosen to place His name there. This word (הַדָּבָר) he designates, as that which God had commanded to His servant Moses, inasmuch as it formed a part of that covenant law which was prescribed to the Israelites as their rule of life. The matter of this word is introduced by לֵאמֹר: *ye* transgress, *I* will scatter; *i.e.* if ye transgress by revolting from me, I will scatter you among the nations,—and ye turn to me and keep my commandments (*i.e.* if ye turn to me and . . .), if there were of you cast out to the end of heaven (*i.e.* to the most distant regions where the end of heaven touches the earth), thence will I gather you, etc. נִדָּח, *part. Niphal*, with a collective meaning, cast-out ones, like Deut. xxx. 4. These words are no verbal quotation, but a free summary, in which Nehemiah had Deut. xxx. 1–5 chiefly in view, of what God had proclaimed in the law of Moses concerning the dispersion of His people among the heathen if they sinned against Him, and of their return to the land of their fathers if they repented and turned to Him. The clause: if the cast-out ones were at the end of heaven, etc., stands verbally in ver. 4. The last words, ver.

9, "(I will bring them) to the place which I have chosen, that my name may dwell there," are a special application of the general promise of the law to the present case. Jerusalem is meant, where the Lord caused His name to dwell in the temple; comp. Deut. xii. 11. The entreaty to remember this word and to fulfil it, seems ill adapted to existing circumstances, for a portion of the people were already brought back to Jerusalem; and Nehemiah's immediate purpose was to pray, not for the return of those still sojourning among the heathen, but for the removal of the affliction and reproach resting on those who were now at Jerusalem. Still less appropriate seems the citation of the words: If ye transgress, I will scatter you among the nations. It must, however, be remembered that Nehemiah is not so much invoking the divine compassion as the righteousness and faithfulness of a covenant God, the great and terrible God that keepeth covenant and mercy (ver. 5). Now this, God had shown Himself to be, by fulfilling the threats of His law that He would scatter His faithless and transgressing people among the nations. Thus His fulfilment of this one side of the covenant strengthened the hope that God would also keep His other covenant word to His people who turned to Him, viz. that He would bring them again to the land of their fathers, to the place of His gracious presence. Hence the reference to the dispersion of the nation among the heathen, forms the actual substructure for the request that so much of the promise as yet remained unfulfilled might come to pass. Nehemiah, moreover, views this promise in the full depth of its import, as securing to Israel not merely an external return to their native land, but their restoration as a community, in the midst of whom the Lord had His dwelling, and manifested Himself as the defence and refuge of His people. To the re-establishment of this covenant relation very much was still wanting. Those who had returned from captivity had indeed settled in the land of their fathers; and the temple in which they might worship God with sacrifices, according to the law, was rebuilt at Jerusalem. But notwithstanding all this, Jerusalem, with its ruined walls

and burned gates, was still like a city lying waste, and exposed to attacks of all kinds; while the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah were loaded with shame and contempt by their heathen neighbours. In this sense, Jerusalem was not yet restored, and the community dwelling therein not yet brought to the place where the name of the Lord dwelt. In this respect, the promise that Jahve would again manifest Himself to His repentant people as the God of the covenant was still unfulfilled, and the petition that He would gather His people to the place which He had chosen to put His name there, *i.e.* to manifest Himself according to His nature, as testified in His covenant (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7), quite justifiable. In ver. 10 Nehemiah supports his petition by the words: And these (now dwelling in Judah and Jerusalem) are Thy servants and Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed, etc. His servants who worship Him in His temple, His people whom He has redeemed from Egypt by His great power and by His strong arm, God cannot leave in affliction and reproach. The words: "redeemed with great power" . . . are reminiscences from Deut. vii. 8, ix. 26, 29, and other passages in the Pentateuch, and refer to the deliverance from Egypt.—Ver. 11. The prayer closes with the reiterated entreaty that God would hearken to the prayer of His servant (*i.e.* Nehemiah), and to the prayer of His servants who delight to fear His name (יִרְאָה, *infin.* like Deut. iv. 10 and elsewhere), *i.e.* of all Israelites who, like Nehemiah, prayed to God to redeem Israel from all his troubles. For himself in particular, Nehemiah also requests: "Prosper Thy servant to-day (הַיּוֹם like ver. 6; לְעַבְדֶּךָ may be either the *accusative* of the person, like 2 Chron. xxvi. 5, or the dative: Prosper his design unto Thy servant, like ii. 20), and give him to mercy (*i.e.* cause him to find mercy; comp. 1 Kings viii. 50; Ps. cvi. 46) before the face of this man." What man he means is explained by the following supplementary remark, "And I was cup-bearer to the king," without whose favour and permission Nehemiah could not have carried his project into execution (as related in chap. ii.).

CHAP. II.—NEHEMIAH JOURNEYS TO JERUSALEM WITH THE KING'S PERMISSION, AND FURNISHED WITH ROYAL LETTERS. HE MAKES A SURVEY OF THE WALLS, AND RESOLVES TO UNDERTAKE THE WORK OF BUILDING THEM.

Three months after receiving the tidings concerning Jerusalem, Nehemiah perceived a favourable opportunity of making request to the king for leave to undertake a journey to the city of his fathers for the purpose of building it, and obtained the permission he entreated, together with letters to the governors on this side the Euphrates to permit him to pass through their provinces, and to the keeper of the royal forests to supply wood for building the walls and gates, and an escort of captains of the army and horsemen for his protection (vers. 1–9), to the great vexation of Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite (ver. 10). In the third night after his arrival at Jerusalem, Nehemiah rode round the city to survey the walls, and incited the rulers of the people and the priests to undertake the work of rebuilding them (vers. 11–18). Sanballat and other enemies of the Jews expressed their contempt thereat, but Nehemiah encountered their ridicule with serious words (vers. 19, 20).

Vers. 1–3. In the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, Nehemiah as cupbearer took the wine and handed it to the king. *Nisan* is, according to the Hebrew calendar, the first month of the year; yet here, as in chap. i., the twentieth year of Artaxerxes is named, and the month Chisleu there mentioned (ver. 1), which, after the Hebrew method of computing the year, was the ninth month and preceded Nisan by three months, is placed in the same year. This can only be explained on the grounds that either the twentieth year of Artaxerxes did not coincide with the year of the calendar, but began later, or that Nehemiah here uses the computation of time current in anterior Asia, and also among the Jews after the captivity in civil matters, and which made the new year begin in

autumn. Of these two views we esteem the latter to be correct, since it cannot be shown that the years of the king's reign would be reckoned from the day of his accession. In chronological statements they were reckoned according to the years of the calendar, so that the commencement of a year of a reign coincided with that of the civil year. If, moreover, the beginning of the year is placed in autumn, Tishri is the first, Chisleu the third, and Nisan the seventh month. The circumstances which induced Nehemiah not to apply to the king till three months after his reception of the tidings which so distressed him, are not stated. It is probable that he himself required some time for deliberation before he could come to a decision as to the best means of remedying the distresses of Jerusalem; then, too, he may not have ventured at once to bring his request before the king from fear of meeting with a refusal, and may therefore have waited till an opportunity favourable to his desires should present itself. יַיִן לְפָנָיו, "wine was before the king," is a circumstantial clause explanatory of what follows. The words allude to some banquet at which the king and queen were present. The last sentence, "And I had not been sad before him" (רַע according to פְּנֵיךָ רָעִים of ver. 2, of a sad countenance), can neither mean, I had never before been sad before him (de Wette); nor, I was accustomed not to be sad before him; but, I had not been sad before him at the moment of presenting the cup to him (Bertheau), because it would not have been becoming to serve the king with a sad demeanour: comp. Esth. iv. 2. The king, however, noticed his sadness, and inquired: "Why is thy countenance sad, since thou art not sick? this is nothing but sorrow of heart, *i.e.* thy sadness of countenance can arise only from sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid;" because the unexpected question obliged him to explain the cause of his sorrow, and he could not tell how the king would view the matter, nor whether he would favour his ardent desire to assist his fellow-countrymen in Judah.—Ver. 3. He nevertheless openly expressed his desire, prefacing it by the accustomed form of wishing the king prosperity, saying: "Let the

king live for ever;" comp. Dan. ii. 4, iii. 9. "Why should not my countenance be sad? for the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and its gates are burned with fire." The question, Why . . . ? means: I have certainly sufficient reason for sadness. The reason is, that (אֲשֶׁר) the city where are the graves of my fathers lieth waste.

Vers. 4–10. Then the king, feeling interested, asked him: For what dost thou make request? בִּקֵּשׁ עַל, to make request for or concerning a thing, like Ezra viii. 23, Esth. iv. 8, vii. 7. The question shows that the king was inclined to relieve the distress of Jerusalem which had been just stated to him. "And so I prayed to the God of heaven," to ensure divine assistance in the request he was about to lay before the king. Then Nehemiah answered (ver. 5), "If it please the king, and if thy servant is well-pleasing before thee, (I beg) that thou wouldest send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it." יִיטַב לְפָנַי, here and Esth. v. 14, is of like meaning with יִיטַב בְּעֵינַי or טוֹב, Esth. viii. 5, 2 Sam. xviii. 4: if thy servant is right in thine eyes, *i.e.* if he thinks rightly concerning the matter in question. The matter of his request is directly combined with this conditional clause by אֲשֶׁר, the connecting term, I beg, being easily supplied from the king's question: For what dost thou beg? —Ver. 6. The king and the queen, who was sitting near him (שֵׁגָל, Ps. xlv. 10), grant him permission to depart after he has, in answer to their inquiry, fixed the period of his absence. Nehemiah makes the result of the conversation, "And it pleased the king," etc., follow immediately upon the question of the king and queen: For how long shall thy journey be, and when wilt thou return? before telling us what was his answer to this question, which is not brought in till afterwards, so that וְאֶתְּנָה לוֹ זְמַן must be understood as expressing: since I had determined the time.—Vers. 7, 8. Hereupon Nehemiah also requested from the king letters to the governors beyond (west of) the river (Euphrates), to allow him to travel unmolested through their provinces to Judah (יִתְּנוּ לִי, let them give me = let there be given me; הַעֲבִיר, to pass or travel through a country, comp. Deut. ii. 30);

and a letter to Asaph, the keeper (inspector) of the royal forests, to give him timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple, and for the walls of the city, and for the governor's own house. These requests were also granted. פַּרְדֵּס in Cant. iv. 13, Eccles. ii. 5, signifies a park or orchard; it is a word of Aryan origin (in Armenian *pardez*, the garden round the house, in Greek παράδεισος), and is explained either from the Sanscrit *para-dêça*, a superior district, or (by Haug) from the Zend. *pairi-daêza*, a fenced-in place. In Old-Persian it probably denoted the king's pleasure-grounds, and in our verse a royal wood or forest. Of the situation of this park nothing reliable can be ascertained. As wood for extensive buildings was to be taken from it, the sycamore forest in the low plains, which had been the property of King David (1 Chron. xxvii. 28), and became, after the overthrow of the Davidic dynasty, first a Babylonian, and then a Persian possession, may be intended.[1] לְקָרוֹת, to timber, to overlay, to cover with beams (comp. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 11) the gates of the citadel which

[1] Older expositors supposed a *regio a Libano ad Antilibanum protensa et arboribus amœnissimis consita* to be meant. In this view, indeed, they followed Cant. iv. 13, but incorrectly. Cler. thought it to be a *tractus terrarum in Judæa, qui Paradisus regius dicebatur.* Josephus speaks (*Ant.* viii. 7. 3) of fine gardens and ponds at Etham, seven miles south of Jerusalem, where Solomon often made pleasure excursions. Hence Ewald (*Gesch.* iv. p. 169, comp. iii. p. 328) thinks that the פַּרְדֵּס which belonged to the king must have been Solomon's old royal park at Ætham, which in the time of Nehemiah had become a Persian domain, and that the hill town lying not far to the west of it, and now called by the Arabs Fureidis, *i.e.* paradisaic, may have received its Hebrew name *Beth-Kerem*, *i.e.* house of vineyards, from similar pleasure-grounds. Hereupon Bertheau grounds the further conjecture, that "the whole district from Ætham to the hill of Paradise, situate about a league east-south-east of Ætham, may from its nature have been once covered with forest; and no hesitation would be felt in connecting the name of the mountain *Gebel el-Fureidis* or *el-Feridis* (Paradise-hill—hill which rises in a Pardes) with the Pardes in question, if it could be proved that this name was already in existence in præ-Christian times." All these conjectures rest on very uncertain bases. The *Dshebel Fureidis* is also called the Hill of the Franks. See the description of it in Robinson's *Palestine*, ii. p. 392 sq., and Tobler, *Topographie von Jerusalem*, ii. pp. 565–572

belongs to the house, *i.e.* to the temple. This citadel—בִּירָה, in Greek *Bâρις*—by the temple is mentioned here for the first time; for in 1 Chron. xxix. 1, 19, the whole temple is called בִּירָה. It was certainly situate on the same place where Hyrcanus I., son of Simon Maccabæus, or the kings of the Asmonean race, built the *ἀκρόπολις* and called it Baris (Jos. *Ant.* xv. 11. 4, comp. with xviii. 4. 3). This was subsequently rebuilt by Herod when he repaired and enlarged the temple, and named Antonia, in honour of his friend Mark Antony. It was a citadel of considerable size, provided with corner towers, walls, chambers, and spacious courts, built on the north-western side of the external chambers of the temple, for the defence of that edifice, and did not extend the entire length of the north side of the present *Haram*, as Robinson (see *Biblical Researches*, p. 300) seeks to show; comp., on the other hand, Tobler, *Topographie von Jerusalem*, i. p. 688 sq., and Rosen, *Haram von Jerusalem*, p. 25 sq. וּלְחוֹמַת is co-ordinate with לָעִיר: "and for the walls of the city;" the timber not being used for building the wall itself, but for the gates (iii. 3, 6). "And for the house into which I come (to dwell)." This must be Nehemiah's official residence as Pecha. For though it is not expressly stated in the present chapter that Nehemiah was appointed Pecha (governor) by Artaxerxes, yet Nehemiah himself tells us, chap. v. 14, that he had been Pecha from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. Former governors had perhaps no official residence becoming their position. By לַבַּיִת the temple cannot, as older expositors thought, be intended. This request also was granted by the king, "according to the good hand of my God upon me;" comp. rem. on Ezra vii. 6.—Ver. 9. Nehemiah delivered the letter when he came to the governors on this side Euphrates. The king had also sent with him captains of the army and horsemen. The second half of ver. 9 contains a supplementary remark, so that וַיִּשְׁלַח must be expressed by the pluperfect. Ezra had been ashamed to request a military escort from the Persian monarch (Ezra viii. 22); but the king gave to the high dignitary called Pecha a guard of soldiers, who certainly remained with him in Jerusalem also

for his protection (iv. 17). Besides these, there were in his retinue his brethren, *i.e.* either relations or fellow-countrymen, and servants, comp. iv. 10, v. 10. That this retinue is not mentioned in the present verses, is owing to the fact that the journey itself is not further described, but only indirectly alluded to.—Ver. 10. When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite heard of his coming, it caused them great annoyance (יֵרַע לָהֶם is strengthened by רָעָה גְדוֹלָה, as in Jonah iv. 1) that a man (as Nehemiah expresses himself ironically from their point of view) was come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. Sanballat is called the Horonite either after his birthplace or place of residence, yet certainly not from Horonaim in Moab, as older expositors imagined (Isa. xv. 5; Jer. xlviii. 34), since he would then have been called a Moabite, but from either the upper or nether Beth-horon, formerly belonging to the tribe of Ephraim (Josh. xvi. 3, 5, xviii. 13), and therefore in the time of Nehemiah certainly appertaining to the region of the Samaritans (Berth.). Tobiah the Ammonite is called הָעֶבֶד, the servant, probably as being a servant or official of the Persian king. These two individuals were undoubtedly influential chiefs of the neighbouring hostile nations of Samaritans and Ammonites, and sought by alliances with Jewish nobles (vi. 17, xiii. 4, 28) to frustrate, whether by force or stratagem, the efforts of Ezra and Nehemiah for the internal and external security of Judah. Nehemiah mentions thus early their annoyance at his arrival, by way of hinting beforehand at their subsequent machinations to delay the fortifying of Jerusalem.

Vers. 11–18. *Nehemiah's arrival at Jerusalem. He surveys the wall, and resolves to restore it.*—Ver. 11. Having arrived at Jerusalem and rested three days (as Ezra had also done, Ezra viii. 32), he arose in the night, and some few men with him, to ride round the wall of the city, and get a notion of its condition. His reason for taking but few men with him is given in the following sentence: "I had told no man what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem." Although he had come to Jerusalem with the re-

solution of fortifying the city by restoring its circumvallation, he spoke of this to no one until he had ascertained, by an inspection of the wall, the magnitude and extent of the work to be accomplished. For, being aware of the hostility of Sanballat and Tobiah, he desired to keep his intention secret until he felt certain of the possibility of carrying it into execution. Hence he made his survey of the wall by night, and took but few men with him, and those on foot, for the sake of not exciting attention. The beast on which he rode was either a horse or a mule.—Ver. 13. "And I went out by night by the valley-gate, and towards the dragon-well, and to the dung-gate." אֶל־פָּנַי, in the direction towards. The dragon-well only occurs here by this name. Judging from its position between the valley-gate and the dung-gate, it is either identical with the well of Gihon (Robinson, *Palestine*, ii. p. 166), whose waters supply the upper and lower pools in the valley of Gihon, the present *Birket el Mamilla* and *Birket es Sultan*, or situate in its immediate neighbourhood. The valley-gate is the modern gate of the city leading to the valley of Gihon, and situated at or near the present Jaffa gate; see rem. on iii. 13. The dung-gate (שַׁעַר הָאַשְׁפֹּת), which in iii. 13 also is placed next the valley-gate, and was a thousand cubits distant therefrom, must be sought for on the south-western side of Zion, where a road, to the south of *Nebi Dâûd* and the Zion gate, now descends into the valley of Hinnom, towards *Sûr Baher*. "And I viewed the walls of Jerusalem which lay broken down, and its gates which were consumed by fire." The word שֹׁבֵר, which the LXX. read, "I was breaking down," gives no tolerable sense; for it cannot mean, I broke through the walls, or, I made a path through the ruins. Many MSS., however, and several editions, offer שֹׁבֵר; and R. Norzi informs us that D. Kimchi and Aben Ezra read שֹׁבֵר. שָׁבַר, of which only the Piel occurs in Hebrew, answers to the Aramæan סְבַר, to look to something; and to the Arabic سبر, to investigate; and סבר בְּ means to look on, to consider, to direct the eyes and thoughts to some object. In the open

מ of הֵמָּ Hiller conjectures that there is a trace of another reading, perhaps מְפָרְצִים; comp. i. 3.—Ver. 14. "And I went on to the fountain-gate, and to the King's pool, and there was no room for the beast to come through under me." The very name of the fountain- or well-gate points to the fountain of Siloah (see rem. on iii. 15); hence it lay on the eastern declivity of Zion, but not in the district or neighbourhood of the present *Bâb el Mogharibeh*, in which tradition finds the ancient dung-gate, but much farther south, in the neighbourhood of the pool of Siloah; see rem. on iii. 15. The King's pool is probably the same which Josephus (*bell. Jud.* v. 4. 2) calls Σολομῶνος κολυμβήθρα, and places east of the spring of Siloah, and which is supposed by Robinson (*Palestine*, ii. pp. 149, 159) and Thenius (*das vorexil. Jerus.*, appendix to a commentary on the books of the Kings, p. 20) to be the present Fountain of the Virgin. Bertheau, however, on the other hand, rightly objects that the Fountain of the Virgin lying deep in the rock, and now reached by a descent of thirty steps, could not properly be designated a pool. He tries rather to identify the King's pool with the outlet of a canal investigated by Tobler (*Topogr.* i. p. 91 sq.), which the latter regards as a conduit for rain-water, fluid impurities, or even the blood of sacrificed animals; but Bertheau as an aqueduct which, perhaps at the place where its entrance is now found, once filled a pool, of which, indeed, no trace has as yet been discovered. But apart from the difficulty of calling the outlet of a canal a pool (Arnold in Herzog's *Realencycl.* xviii. p. 656), the circumstance, that Tobler could find in neither of the above-described canals any trace of high antiquity, tells against this conjecture. Much more may be said in favour of the view of E. G. Schultz (*Jerusalem*, p. 58 sq.), that the half-choked-up pool near Ain Silwan may be the King's pool and Solomon's pool; for travellers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries mention a *piscina grandis foras* and *natatoria Siloë* at the mouth of the fountain of Siloah (comp. Leyrer in Herzog's *Realencycl.* xiv. p. 372). See also rem. on iii. 15. Here there was no room for the beast to get

through, the road being choked up with the ruins of the walls that had been destroyed, so that Nehemiah was obliged to dismount.—Ver. 15. Then I (went on) ascending the valley and viewing the wall, and so entered by the valley-gate, and returned. וָאֱהִי with the participle expresses the continuance of an action, and hence in this place the continuous ascent of the valley and survey of the wall. The נַחַל which he ascended was doubtless the valley of Kidron (נַחַל קִדְרוֹן, 2 Sam. xx. 23, 1 Kings ii. 37, and elsewhere). וָאָשׁוּב וָאָבוֹא are connected, שׁוּב expressing merely the idea of repetition (Gesenius, *heb. Gram.* § 142, 3): I came again into the valley-gate. Older expositors incorrectly explain these words to mean, I turned round, traversing again the road by which I had come; Bertheau: I turned to go farther in a westerly direction, and after making the circuit of the entire city, I re-entered by the valley-gate. This sense is correct as to fact, but inadmissible, as requiring too much to complete it. If we take אָשׁוּב adverbially, these completions are unnecessary. Nehemiah does not give the particulars of the latter portion of his circuit, but merely tells us that after having ascended the valley of Kidron, he re-entered by the valley-gate, and returned to his residence, obviously assuming, that from the upper part of the vale of Kidron he could only return to the valley-gate at the west by passing along the northern part of the wall.

Vers. 16–18. He had spoken to no one of his purpose (ver. 12); hence the rulers of the city knew neither whither he was going nor what he was doing (*i.e.* undertaking) when he rode by night out of the city gate accompanied by a few followers. As yet he had said nothing either to the Jews (the citizens of Jerusalem), the priests, the nobles, the rulers, or the rest who did the work. הַחֹרִים and הַסְּגָנִים are connected, as in Ezra ix. 2 הַשָּׂרִים and הַסְּגָנִים. The nobles (חֹרִים, *nobiles*) or princes are the heads of the different houses or races of the people; סְגָנִים, the rulers of the town, the authorities. עֹשֵׂה הַמְּלָאכָה, the doers of the work, are the builders; comp. Ezra iii. 9. When these are, in comparison with the priests, nobles, and rulers, designated as יֶתֶר, the remnant,

this is explained by the fact that the priests and rulers of the people were not actively engaged in building. הַמְּלָאכָה, the work in question, *i.e.* here the building of the walls. עַד בֵּן, until thus, *i.e.* until now, until the time apparent from the context. Nehemiah then, having inspected the condition of the ruined walls, and being now persuaded of the possibility of restoring them, made known his resolution to the nobles, the rulers, and the community, *i.e.* to a public assembly called together for this purpose (ver. 17). "Ye see (have before your eyes, know from experience) the distress that we are in, that Jerusalem lieth waste: come (לְכוּ), let us build up the walls of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach." In other words: Let us by building our walls put an end to the miserable condition which gives our adversaries occasion to reproach us.—Ver. 18. To gain the favourable regard of the assembly for his design, he informs them how God had so far prospered his undertaking: I told them of the hand of my God, that it = that the hand my God had graciously provided for me, *i.e.* that God had so graciously arranged my journey to Jerusalem; and the king's words that he had spoken to me, *sc.* with respect to the building of the wall, of which we are told ii. 8 only thus much, that the king gave orders to the keeper of the royal forest to give him wood for building. Encouraged by this information, the assembly exclaimed, "Let us arise and build;" and "they strengthened their hands for good," *i.e.* they vigorously set about the good work.

Vers. 19 and 20. When the adversaries of the Jews heard this, they derided their resolution. Beside Sanballat and Tobiah (comp. ver. 10), Geshem the Arabian is also named as an adversary: so, too, vi. 1, 2, and 6, where Gashmu, the fuller pronunciation of his name, occurs. He was probably the chief of some Arab race dwelling in South Palestine, not far from Jerusalem (comp. the Arabians, iv. 1). These enemies ironically exclaimed: What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? The irony lies in the fact that they did not give the Jews credit for power to build fortifications, so as to be able to rebel. Comp. vi. 6, where

Sanballat, in an open letter to Nehemiah, again reproaches them with rebellion.—Ver. 20. Nehemiah replied with impressive gravity: "The God of heaven, He will prosper us, and we His servants will arise and build; but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem." צְדָקָה like 2 Sam. xix. 99. זִכָּרוֹן, memorial; only members of the congregation, who may hope to live in their descendants in Jerusalem, can be said to have a memorial there.

CHAPS. III. AND IV.—THE BUILDING OF THE WALLS AND GATES OF JERUSALEM.

In these two chapters is described the building of the walls and gates of Jerusalem: the individuals and families who performed the work, and the portion of wall and the gates on which different families were respectively employed, being specified in chap. iii. 1–32; while the attempts of Sanballat and his associates to obstruct the building and the defensive measures resorted to by Nehemiah follow, iii. 33–iv. 17.

Chap. iii. 1–32. *The enumeration of the builders, and of the gates and portions of wall built*, begins with the sheep-gate and the portion of the wall adjoining it, built by the priests (1 and 2), and concludes with the goldsmiths and merchants who built up to the sheep-gate (ver. 32). Throughout it is almost constantly said of the several parties of builders that they built עַל יָדוֹ, by the side of, next to, the party previously named. Hence we are justified in inferring that the course of the wall is adhered to in this statement, and that the gates are mentioned in the actual order in which they were found in the walls.[1]—Vers. 1 and 2. The narrative of the building is connected with what precedes by וַיָּקָם, which alludes to the carrying out of the resolve, נָקוּם, ii. 18. The

[1] This description of the walls of Jerusalem, together with the short statements in chap. ii. 13–15 and xii. 27–40, forms the chief authority for the topography of ancient Jerusalem (before the captivity), and has been frequently discussed and explained. Comp. a summary of recent topographical investigations on this subject by Arnold in Herzog's *Realencycl.* xviii. p. 620 sq. Among the numerous plans of ancient

enumeration begins with Eliashib the high priest and his brethren, *i.e.* the ordinary priests. These built the sheep-gate, rightly sought by modern topographers in the eastern wall north of Haram, the site of the ancient temple, *i.e.* in the position or neighbourhood of the present St. Stephen's gate, through which the Bedouins to this day drive sheep into the town for sale (Tobler, *Topogr.* i. p. 149). "Although," as Bertheau remarks, "we are not generally justified, after the lapse of so many centuries, during which great changes have been made in the positions of the gates and walls, and in face of the fact that the present walls and gates were not erected till the years 1536, 1537, and 1539, in determining the direction and extent of the walls between the several gates, and the locality of the gates in this description, by the direction and extent of the wall and the locality of the gates in modern Jerusalem (Tobl. *Topogr. Dritte Wanderung*, p. 265), yet in the present instance valid arguments exist in favour of this view. The very neighbourhood of the temple and the nature of the soil bear witness that from ancient times a gate was placed here which took its name from the circumstance that sheep were driven in by it, whether for sale in the market or for sacrificial purposes."[1] They sanctified it and set up its doors: and to the tower Hammeah they sanctified it unto the tower Hananeel. קִדְּשׁוּ, to sanctify, to dedicate (comp. 1 Kings viii. 64), can here only mean that the priests dedicated that portion of building on which they were engaged, as soon as they had finished it, for the purpose of sanctifying the whole work by this preliminary consecration; the solemn dedication of the whole wall not taking place till afterwards, and being related xii. 27 sq. The setting up of the doors in the

Jerusalem, the best is: *A plan of the town and environs of Jerusalem, constructed by* C. W. M. Van de Velde; *with Memoir by* Dr. Titus Tobler, 1858, Gotha.

[1] In the neighbourhood of this gate was the pool of Bethesda (John v. 2), *i.e.* either the present *Birket Israel* or *Birket es Serain*, south of St. Stephen's gate (Tobler, *Denkblätter*, p. 53 sq., and *Dritte Wanderung*, p. 221), or the Struthion pool mentioned by Josephus, *bell. Jud.* v. 11. 4, κολυμβήθρα τοῦ στρουθίου; Krafft, *Topographie von Jerusalem*, p. 127 sq.

gates did not, according to vi. 1, take place till after all the breaches in the wall had been repaired, *i.e.* till the building of the wall was completed. It is, however, mentioned here, and in vers. 3, 6, etc., contemporaneously with the wall-building; because the builders of the several gates, undertaking also the construction and setting up of the doors, the intention is to give a summary of the work executed by the respective building parties. וְעַד־מִגְדַּל הַמֵּאָה is still dependent on יִבְנוּ, that is to say, this verb must be mentally repeated before the words: they built to the tower Hammeah, they sanctified it (the suffix in קִדְּשׁוּהוּ can only relate to מִגְדָּל); יִבְנוּ must also be repeated before עַד מִגְדַּל חֲנַנְאֵל: and they built further, unto the tower Hananeel. The tower הַמֵּאָה (the hundred) is only mentioned here and chap. xii. 39, but the tower Hananeel is likewise spoken of Jer. xxxi. 38 and Zech. xiv. 10. From these passages it appears that the two towers were so situated, that any one going from west to east along the north wall of the city, and thence southward, would first come to the tower Hananeel, and afterwards to the tower Hammeah, and that both were between the fish-gate and the sheep-gate. From the passages in Jeremiah and Zechariah especially, it is evident that the tower Hananeel stood at the north-east corner of the wall. Hence the statement in this verse, that the portion of wall built by the priests extended to the north-east corner of the wall; and the tower Hammeah must be sought between the sheep-gate and the north-east corner of the wall. Whence the names of these towers were derived is unknown.—Ver. 2. Next to him built the men of Jericho (comp. Ezra ii. 24); and next to them built Zaccur the son of Imri. The suffix of the first עַל יָדוֹ, though in the singular number, refers to Eliashib and the priests (ver. 1), and that of the second to the men of Jericho, while in vers. 4 and 9, on the contrary, a singular noun is followed by עַל יָדָם; both עַל יָדוֹ and עַל יָדָם expressing merely the notion beside, next to, the builders of the respective portions being at one time regarded as in a plural, at another in a singular sense (as a company). The portion built by the men of Jericho and Zaccur the

son of Imri, the head of a family, not mentioned elsewhere, lay between the tower Hananeel and the fish-gate in the north wall. When individuals are, like Zaccur, mentioned in the following description, *e.g.* vers. 4, 6, as builders or repairers of portions of wall, they are heads of houses who engaged in the work of building at the head of the fathers of families and individuals who were dependent on them.—Ver. 3. The fish-gate did the sons of Senaah build (see rem. on Ezra ii. 35); they laid its beams, and set up its doors, bolts, and bars. The fish-gate probably received its name from the fish-market in its neighbourhood, to which the Syrians brought sea-fish (13, 16); it is also mentioned in xii. 39, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14, and Zeph. i. 10. It was not situated, as Thenius has represented it in his plan of Jerusalem, close to the corner tower of Hananeel, but somewhat to the west of it in the north wall; two lengths of wall being, according to ver. 2, built between this tower and the gate in question. With respect to קֹרוֹתָהּ, see rem. on ii. 8. Besides the doors for the gate, מַנְעוּלָיו and בְּרִיחָיו are mentioned, as also vers. 6, 13–15. Both words denote bars for closing doors. בְּרִיחִים are, to judge from the use of this word in the description of the tabernacle (Ex. xxvi. 26 sq. and elsewhere), longer bars, therefore cross-bars, used on the inner side of the door; and מַנְעוּלִים the brackets into which they were inserted.—Vers. 4 and 5. Next to these, Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Hakkoz, Meshullam the son of Berechiah, Zadok the son of Baana, and the Tekoites, repaired in the above order, each a portion of wall. הֶחֱזִיק, to strengthen, means here to repair the gaps and holes in the wall; comp. Ezra xxvii. 9, 27. Meremoth ben Urijah repaired, according to ver. 21, another portion besides. Meshullam ben Berechiah was, according to vi. 18, a person of consideration in Jerusalem. The men of Tekoa, who do not occur among those who returned with Zerubbabel (Ezra ii.), also repaired a second portion. "But their nobles brought not their neck to the service of their Lord." The expression "to bring the neck to service" is, according to Jer. xxvii. 11, to be understood as meaning: to bring the

neck under the yoke of any one, *i.e.* to subject oneself to the service of another. צַוָּארָם stands for צַוָּארָם. It is questionable whether אֲדֹנֵיהֶם is to be taken as the plural of excellence, and understood of God, as in Deut. x. 17, Ps. cxxxv. 3, Mal. i. 6; or of earthly lords or rulers, as in Gen. xl. 1, 2 Sam. x. 3, 1 Kings xii. 27. The former view seems to us decidedly correct, for it cannot be discerned how the suffix should (according to Bertheau's opinion) prevent our thinking of the service of God, if the repairing of the wall of Jerusalem may be regarded as a service required by God and rendered to Him. Besides, the fact that אֲדֹנִים is only used of kings, and is inapplicable whether to the authorities in Jerusalem or to Nehemiah, speaks against referring it to secular rulers or authorities.

Vers. 6–12. From the gate of the old wall to the valley gate.—Ver. 6. שַׁעַר הַיְשָׁנָה does not mean the old gate, for הישנה is genitive. Schultz (*Jerus.* p. 90), Thenius, and Bertheau supply הָעִיר, gate of the old town, and explain the name from the fact that Bezetha, the new town, already existed as a suburb or village in front of the gate, which was named after the contrast. To this Arnold rightly objects (in Herzog's *Realencycl.* xviii. p. 628) that it is by no means proved that there was at that time any contrast between the old and new towns, and as well as Hupfeld (*die topograph. Streitfragen über Jerus.*, in the *morgenl. Zeitschrift*, xv. p. 231) supplies חוֹמָה: gate of the old wall. He does not, however, derive this designation from the remark (ver. 8), "They fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall," as though this old wall received its name from having been left undestroyed by the Chaldeans, which is irreconcilable with the fact (4–8) that both the gate of the old wall and the portions of wall adjoining it on each side were now built, but understands the term "old wall" as used in contrast to the "broad wall," which had indeed been rebuilt after the destruction by Joash (2 Kings xiv. 13). This view we esteem to be correct. The individuals specified as the builders of this gate are not further known. That two *principes* were employed in the rebuilding of this gate is

explained by Ramb. as arising *vel quod penitus disturbata a Chaldæis, vel quod magnis sumtibus reparanda fuit, quos unus princeps ferre non potuit.*—Ver. 7. Next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah. If Melatiah is to be regarded as the superintendent of the men of Gibeon, Jadon the Meronothite must be equally esteemed that of the men of Mizpah. Meronoth, mentioned only here and 1 Chron. xxvii. 30, must have been some small place near Mizpah. Mizpah (הַמִּצְפָּה, the watch-tower) is probably the modern *Nebi Samwil*, two leagues to the north-east of Jerusalem; see rem. on Josh. xix. 26. The meaning of the words next following, לְכִסֵּא פַּחַת וגו׳, is questionable. Bertheau, together with Osiander, Cler., de Wette, and others, understands them as more precisely defining the men before named, as men of Gibeon and Mizpah, of the throne or belonging to the throne of the Pechah of Eber hannahar. This addition brings to light the fact that Jews who were not under the jurisdiction of Nehemiah, nevertheless took part in the restoration of the wall. It also distinguishes these men of Mizpah from those mentioned vers. 15 and 19, who were certainly not under the Pechah of Eber hannahar. Finally, the boundary of the little territory of the returned Jewish community must have been at about Mizpah and Gibeon; and a statement that certain inhabitants of this district were not under the Pechah of Jerusalem, but under the Pechah of the province west of Euphrates, would agree with the position of Gibeon and Mizpah. None, however, of these reasons are of much force. For if, according to vers. 5 and 27, the Tekoites repaired two different lengths of wall, without this fact implying any distinction between these two parties of Tekoite builders, the same may be the case with the men of Gibeon and Mizpah. Besides, neither in this verse, nor in vers. 15 and 19 are the men of Mizpah in general spoken of, so as to make a distinction necessary; for in this verse two chiefs, Melatiah and Jadon, are designated as men of Gibeon and Mizpah, and in 15 and 19 two rulers of the district of

Mizpah are specified by name. Hence the view that part of the inhabitants of Mizpah were under the jurisdiction of the Pechah of the province west of Euphrates, and part under that of the Pechah of Jerusalem, is devoid of probability. Finally, there is no adequate analogy for the metonomy set up in support of this view, viz. that כִּסֵּא, a seat, a throne, stands for jurisdiction. The words in question can have only a local signification. כִּסֵּא may indeed by metonomy be used for the official residence, but not for the official or judicial district, or jurisdiction of the Pechah. לְכִסֵּא does not state the point to which, but the direction or locality in which, these persons repaired the wall: "towards the seat of the Pechah," *i.e.* at the place where the court or tribunal of the governor placed over the province on this side Euphrates was held when he came to Jerusalem to administer justice, or to perform any other official duties required of him. This being so, it appears from this verse that this court was within the northern wall, and undoubtedly near a gate.—Ver. 8. Next to him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah of the goldsmiths, and next to him repaired Hananiah, a son of the apothecaries. צוֹרְפִים is in explanatory apposition to the name Uzziel, and the plural is used to denote that his fellow-artisans worked with him under his direction. Hananiah is called בֶּן־הָרַקָּחִים, son of the apothecaries, *i.e.* belonging to the guild of apothecaries. The obscure words, וַיַּעַזְבוּ וגו', "and they left Jerusalem unto the broad wall," have been variously interpreted. From xii. 38, where the broad wall is also mentioned, it appears that a length of wall between the tower of the furnaces and the gate of Ephraim was thus named, and not merely a place in the wall distinguished for its breadth, either because it stood out or formed a corner, as Bertheau supposes; for the reason adduced for this opinion, viz. that it is not said that the procession went along the broad wall, depends upon a mistaken interpretation of the passage cited. The expression "the broad wall" denotes a further length of wall; and as this lay, according to xii. 38, west of the gate of Ephraim, the conjecture forces itself upon us, that the broad

wall was that 400 cubits of the wall of Jerusalem, broken down by the Israelite king Joash, from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate (2 Kings xiv. 13), and afterwards rebuilt by Uzziel of a greater breadth, and consequently of increased strength (Joseph. *Antiq.* ix. 10. 3). Now the gate of Ephraim not being mentioned among the rebuilt gates, and this gate nevertheless existing (according to viii. 16) in the days of Nehemiah, the reason of this omission must be the circumstance that it was left standing when the wall of Jerusalem was destroyed. The remark, then, in this verse seems to say the same concerning the broad wall, whether we understand it to mean: the builders left Jerusalem untouched as far as the broad wall, because this place as well as the adjoining gate of Ephraim needed no restoration; or: the Chaldeans had here left Jerusalem, *i.e.* either the town or town-wall, standing. So Hupfeld in his above-cited work, p. 231; Arnold; and even older expositors.[1]

Vers. 9 and 10. Further lengths of wall were built by Rephaiah ben Hur, the ruler of the half district of Jerusalem, *i.e.* of the district of country belonging to Jerusalem (comp. ver. 19 with ver. 15, where Mizpah and the district of Mizpah are distinguished); by Jedaiah ben Harumaph,

[1] Bertheau's interpretation of this statement, viz. that at the rebuilding and re-fortification of the town after the captivity, the part of the town extending to the broad wall was left, *i.e.* was not rebuilt, but delayed for the present, answers neither to the verbal sense of the passage nor to the particular mentioned xii. 38, that at the dedication of the wall the second company of them that gave thanks went upon the wall from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall; and over from beyond the gate of Ephraim, etc. Haneberg (in Reusch's *theol. Literaturbl.* 1869, No. 12) supports this view, but understands by "the broad wall" the wall which had a broad circuit, *i.e.* the wall previous to the captivity, and hence infers that the Jerusalem now rebuilt was not equal in extent to the old city. But if a portion of the former city had here been left outside the new wall, the gate of Ephraim would have been displaced, and must have been rebuilt elsewhere in a position to the south of the old gate. Still less can the attempt of the elder Buxtorf (*Lexic. talm. rabb. s.v.* עָזַב), now revived by Ewald (*Gesch.* iv. p. 174), to force upon the word עָזַב the meaning *restaurare*, or fortify, be justified.

וְנֶגֶד בֵּיתוֹ, and indeed before (opposite) his house, *i.e.* the portion of wall which lay opposite his own dwelling; and by Hattush the son of Hashabniah. Whether Hattush is to be identified with the priest of this name (x. 5), or with the similarly named descendant of David (Ezra viii. 2), or with neither, cannot be determined.—Ver. 11. A second section of wall was repaired by Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashshub ben Pahath-Moab, two families who came up with Zerubbabel, Ezra ii. 6 and 32. Bertheau understands מִדָּה שֵׁנִית of a second section of wall added to a first already repaired by the same builders. So, too, he says, did Meremoth ben Urijah build one portion, ver. 4, and a second, ver. 21; comp. vers. 5 and 27, 15 and 19, 8 and 30. This first portion, however, which this mention of a second presupposes, not being named, he infers that our present text has not preserved its original completeness, and thinks it probable, from xii. 38 and 39, that certain statements, in this description, relating to the gate of Ephraim and its neighbourhood, which once stood before ver. 8, have been omitted. This inference is unfounded. The non-mention of the gate of Ephraim is to be ascribed, as we have already remarked on ver. 8, to other reasons than the incompleteness of the text; and the assertion that מִדָּה שֵׁנִית assumes that a former portion was repaired by the same builders, receives no support from a comparison of vers. 5 with 27, 15 with 19, and 8 with 30. Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, who, according to ver. 30, built מִדָּה שֵׁנִי, are not identical with Hananiah the son of the apothecaries, ver. 8. The same remark applies to Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah (ver. 19), and Shallum the ruler of the district of Mizpah (ver. 15). Only in vers. 5 and 27, and 4 and 21, are the names of the builders the same. Moreover, besides vers. 21 and 27, מִדָּה שֵׁנִית occurs five times more (vers. 11, 19, 20, 24, and 30) with respect to builders not previously (nor subsequently) mentioned in this list. Hence, in five different places, the names of the building parties, and the notices of the portions of wall built by them respectively, must have been lost,—a circumstance *à*

priori incredible. When, however, we consider the verses, in which מִדָּה שֵׁנִית occurs, more closely, the second length is, in vers. 19, 20, 21, 24, and 27, more nearly defined by a statement of locality: thus, in ver. 19, we have a second piece over against the ascent to the arsenal at the angle; in ver. 20, a second piece from the angle to the door of the house of Eliashib; in ver. 21, a second piece from the door of the house of Eliashib to . . .; in ver. 24, a second piece from the house of Azariah to . . ., who, according to ver. 23, built near his own house; in ver. 27, a second piece over against the great projecting tower . . ., as far as which, according to ver. 26, the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel. From all this, it is evident that מִדָּה שֵׁנִית in these verses, always denotes a second portion of that length of wall previously spoken of, or a portion next to that of which the building was previously mentioned. And so must מִדָּה שֵׁנִית be understood in the present verse (11), where it is used because Malchiah and Hashshub repaired or built the tower of the furnaces, besides the portion of wall. מִדָּה שֵׁנִית may be rendered, "another or a further piece." The word שֵׁנִית is chosen, because that previously mentioned is regarded as a first. The tower of the furnaces lay, according to this verse and xii. 38, where alone it is again mentioned, between the broad wall and the valley-gate. Now, since there was between the gate of Ephraim and the corner-gate a portion of wall four hundred cubits long (see 2 Kings xiv. 13), which, as has been above remarked, went by the name of the broad wall, it is plain that the tower of the furnaces must be sought for in the neighbourhood of the corner-gate, or perhaps even identified with it. This is the simplest way of accounting for the omission of any notice in the present description of this gate, which is mentioned not merely before (2 Chron. xxvi. 9; Jer. xxxi. 38; and 2 Kings xiv. 13), but also after the captivity (Zech. xiv. 10). It is probable that the tower of the furnaces served as a defence for the corner-gate at the north-western corner of the town, where now lie, upon an earlier building of large stones with morticed edges, probably a fragment of the old Jewish wall,

the ruins of the ancient *Kal'at el Dshalud* (tower of Goliath), which might, at the time of the Crusades, have formed the corner bastion of the city: comp. Rob. *Palestine*, ii. p. 114; *Biblical Researches*, p. 252; and Tobler, *Topogr.* i. p. 67 sq. —Ver. 12. Next repaired Shallum, ruler of the other (comp. ver. 9) half district of Jerusalem, he and his daughters. הוּא can only refer to Shallum, not to פֶּלֶךְ, which would make the daughters signify the daughters of the district, of the villages and places in the district.

Vers. 13 and 14. From the valley-gate to the dung-gate. The *valley-gate* lay in the west, in the neighbourhood of the present Jaffa gate (see rem. on ii. 13), "where," as Tobler, *Topogr.* i. p. 163, expresses it, "we may conclude there must almost always have been, on the ridge near the present citadel, the site in the time of Titus of the water-gate also (Joseph. *bell. Jud.* v. 7. 3), an entrance provided with gates." Hanun and the inhabitants of *Zanoah* are here connected, probably because Hanun was the chief or ruler of the inhabitants of this place. *Zanoah*, now *Zanna*, is in the *Wady Ismail*, west of Jerusalem; see rem. on Josh. xv. 34. They built and set up its doors, etc.; comp. ver. 6. The further statement, "and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung-gate," still depends on וַיַּחְזִיק, the principal verb of the verse. It is incomprehensible how Bertheau can say that this statement does not refer to the repairing of the wall, but only declares that the distance from the valley-gate to the dung-gate amounted to one thousand cubits. For the remark, that a section of such a length is, in comparison with the other sections, far too extensive, naturally proves nothing more than that the wall in this part had suffered less damage, and therefore needed less repair. The number one thousand cubits is certainly stated in round numbers. The length from the present Jaffa gate to the supposed site of the dung-gate, on the south-western edge of Zion, is above two thousand five hundred feet. The dung-gate may, however, have been placed at a greater distance from the road leading to *Baher*. חַשְׁפוֹת is only another form for הַאַשְׁפוֹת (without א prosthetic). Malchiah ben Rechab, per-

haps a Rechabite, built and fortified the dung-gate; for though the Rechabites were forbidden to build themselves houses (Jer. xxxv. 7), they might, without transgressing this paternal injunction, take part in building the fortifications of Jerusalem (Berth.). This conjecture is, however, devoid of probability, for a Rechabite would hardly be a prince or ruler of the district of Beth-haccerem. The name Rechab occurs as early as the days of David, 2 Sam. iv. 5. בֵּית־הַכֶּרֶם, *i.e.* the garden or vineyard-house, where, according to Jer. vi. 1, the children of Benjamin were wont to set up a banner, and to blow the trumpet in Tekoa, is placed by Jerome (Comm. Jer. vi.) upon a hill between Jerusalem and Tekoa; on which account Pococke (*Reise*, ii. p. 63) thinks Beth-Cherem must be sought for on the eminence now known as the Frank mountain, the Dshebel Fureidis, upon which was the Herodium of Josephus. This opinion is embraced with some hesitation by Robinson (*Pal.* ii. p. 397), and unreservedly by Wilson (*The Holy City*, i. p. 396) and v. de Velde, because "when we consider that this hill is the highest point in the whole district, and is by reason of its isolated position and conical shape very conspicuous, we shall find that no other locality better corresponds with the passage cited."

Ver. 15. The *fountain-gate* and a portion of wall adjoining it was repaired by Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, the ruler of the district of Mizpah. כָּל־חֹזֶה occurs again, xi. 5, apparently as the name of another individual. To יִבְנֶנּוּ is added יְסַכְּלֶנּוּ, he covered it, from סָכַל, to shade, to cover, answering to the קֹרָתוֹ of vers. 3 and 6, probably to cover with a layer of beams. The position of the fountain-gate is apparent from the description of the adjoining length of wall which Shallum also repaired. This was "the wall of the pool of Shelach (Siloah) by the king's garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David." The word שִׁלֹחַ recalls שִׁלֹחַ; the pool of Shelach can be none other than the pool which received its water through the שִׁלֹחַ, *i.e.* *missio* (*aquæ*). By the researches of Robinson (*Pal.* ii. p. 148 sq.) and Tobler (*die Siloahquelle u. der Oelberg*, p. 6 sq.),

it has been shown that the pool of Siloah receives its water from a subterranean conduit 1750 feet long, cut through the rock from the Fountain of the Virgin, *Ain Sitti Miriam*, on the eastern slope of Ophel. Near to the pool of Siloah, on the eastern declivity of Zion, just where the Tyropœan valley opens into the vale of Kidron, is found an old and larger pool (*Birket el Ḥamra*), now covered with grass and trees, and choked with earth, called by Tobler the lower pool of Siloah, to distinguish it from the one still existing, which, because it lies north-west of the former, he calls the upper pool of Siloah. One of these pools of Siloah, probably the lower and larger, is certainly the king's pool mentioned ii. 14, in the neighbourhood of which lay, towards the east and south-east, the king's garden. The wall of the pool of Shelach need not have reached quite up to the pool, but may have gone along the edge of the south-eastern slope of Zion, at some distance therefrom. In considering the next particular following, "unto the stairs that go down from the city of David," we must turn our thoughts towards a locality somewhat to the north of this pool, the description now proceeding from the south-eastern corner of the wall northward. These stairs are not yet pointed out with certainty, unless perhaps some remains of them are preserved in the "length of rocky escarpment," which Robinson (*Pal.* ii. p. 102, and *Biblical Researches*, p. 247) remarked on the narrow ridge of the eastern slope of the hill of Zion, north of Siloam, at a distance of 960 feet from the present wall of the city, "apparently the foundations of a wall or of some similar piece of building."[1]

[1] Bertheau's view, that these stairs were situated where Mount Zion, upon which stood the city of David, descends abruptly towards the east, and therefore on the precipice running from south to north, which still rises ninety-one feet above the ground northwards of the now so-called Bab el Mogharibeh or dung-gate, opposite the southern part of the west wall of the temple area, is decidedly incorrect. For this place is two thousand feet, *i.e.* more than one thousand cubits, distant from the pool of Siloah, while our text places them immediately after the length of wall by this pool. The transposition of these "steps" to a position within the present wall of the city is, in Bertheau's case, connected with

Vers. 16–19. The wall from the steps leading from the city of David to the angle opposite the armoury. From ver. 16 onwards we find for the most part אַחֲרָיו, after him, instead of עַל יָדוֹ, which only occurs again in vers. 17 and 19. Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of half the district of Beth-zur (see rem. on 2 Chron. xi. 7), repaired the wall as far as "opposite the sepulchres of David, and unto the pool that was made, and to the house of the heroes." The sepulchres of David are the sepulchres of the house of David in the city of David (comp. 2 Chron. xxxii. 33). "Opposite the sepulchres of David" is the length of wall on the eastern side of Zion, where was probably, as Thenius

the erroneous notion that the fountain-gate (ver. 15 and ii. 14) stood on the site of the present dung-gate (*Bab el Mogharibeh*), for which no other reason appears than the assumption that the southern wall of the city of David, before the captivity, went over Zion, in the same direction as the southern wall of modern Jerusalem, only perhaps in a rather more southerly direction,—an assumption shown to be erroneous, even by the circumstance that in this case the sepulchres of David, Solomon, and the kings of Judah would have stood outside the city wall, on the southern part of Zion; while, according to the Scripture narrative, David, Solomon, and the kings of Judah were buried *in* the city of David (1 Kings ii. 10, xi. 42, xiv. 31, xv. 8, and elsewhere). But apart from this consideration, this hypothesis is shattered by the statements of this fifteenth verse, which Bertheau cannot explain so inconsistently with the other statements concerning the building of the wall, as to make them say that any one coming from the west and going round by the south of the city towards the east, would first arrive at the fountain-gate, and then at the portion of wall in question; but is obliged to explain, so that the chief work, the building of the fountain-gate, is mentioned first; then the slighter work, the reparation of a length of wall *as supplementary;* and this makes the localities enumerated in ver. 13 succeed each other in the following order, in a direction from the west by south and east towards the north: "Valley-gate—one thousand cubits of wall as far as the dung-gate; dung-gate—the wall of the conduit towards the king's garden, as far as the stairs which lead from the city of David—fountain-gate." No adequate reason for this transposition of the text is afforded by the circumstance that no portion of wall is mentioned (vers. 14 and 15) as being repaired between the dung-gate and the valley-gate. For how do we know that this portion on the southern side of Zion was broken down and needing repair? Might not the length between these two gates have been left standing when the city was burnt by the Chaldeans?

endeavours to show in the *Zeitschr.* of the *deutsch morgenl. Gesellsch.* xxi. p. 495 sq., an entrance to the burying-place of the house of David, which was within the city. The "pool that was made" must be sought at no great distance, in the Tyropœan valley, but has not yet been discovered. The view of Krafft (*Topographie von Jerusalem*, p. 152), that it was the reservoir artificially constructed by Hezekiah, between the two walls for the water of the old pool (Isa. xxii. 11), rests upon incorrect combinations. "The house of the heroes" is also unknown. In vers. 17 and 18, the lengths of wall repaired by the three building parties there mentioned are not stated. "The Levites, Rehum the son of Bani," stands for: the Levites under Rehum the son of Bani. There was a Rehum among those who returned with Zerubbabel, xii. 3, Ezra ii. 2; and a Bani occurs among the Levites in ix. 5. After him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of half the district of Keilah, for his district. Keilah, situate, according to Josh. xv. 44 and 1 Sam. xxiii. 1, in the hill region, is probably the village of Kilâ, discovered by Tobler (vol. iii. p. 151), eastward of Beit Dshibrin. By the addition לְפִלְכּוֹ, for his district, *i.e.* that half of the whole district which was under his rule, "it is expressly stated that the two halves of the district of Keilah worked apart one from the other" (Bertheau). The other half is mentioned in the verse next following.—Ver. 18. "Their brethren" are the inhabitants of the second half, who were under the rule of Bavai the son of Henadad.—Ver. 19. Next to these repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece (on מִדָּה שֵׁנִית, see rem. on ver. 11) opposite the ascent to the armoury of the angle. הַנֶּשֶׁק or הַנָּשֶׁק (in most editions) is probably an abbreviation of בֵּית־הַנֶּשֶׁק, arsenal, armoury; and הַמִּקְצוֹעַ is, notwithstanding the article in הַנֶּשֶׁק, genitive: for to combine it as an accusative with עֲלוֹת, and read, "the going up of the armoury upon the angle," gives no suitable meaning. The locality itself cannot indeed be more precisely stated. The armoury was probably situate on the east side of Zion, at a place where the wall of the city formed an angle; or it occupied an angle within the city

itself, no other buildings adjoining it on the south. The opinion of Bertheau, that the armoury stood where the tower described by Tobler (*Dritte Wand.* p. 228) stands, viz. about midway between the modern Zion gate and the dung-gate, and of which he says that "its lower strata of stones are undoubtedly of a remoter date than the rebuilding of the wall in the sixteenth century," coincides with the assumption already refuted, that the old wall of the city of David passed, like the southern wall of modern Jerusalem, over Mount Zion.

Vers. 20–25. The wall from the angle to the place of the court of the prison by the king's upper house.—Ver. 20. After him Baruch the son of Zabbai emulously repaired a second length of wall, from the angle to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. Bertheau objects to the reading הַחֲרָה, and conjectures that it should be הֲהָרָה, "up the hill." But the reason he adduces, viz. that often as the word הַחֲזִיק occurs in this description, a further definition is nowhere else added to it, speaks as much against, as for his proposed alteration; definitions of locality never, throughout the entire narrative, preceding הַחֲזִיק, but uniformly standing after it, as also in the present verse. Certainly הַחֲרָה cannot here mean either to be angry, or to be incensed, but may without difficulty be taken, in the sense of the Tiphal. תִּחְרָה, to emulate, to contend (Jer. xxii. 15, xii. 5), and the perfect adverbially subordinated to the following verb (comp. Gesen. *Gramm.* § 142, 3, *a*). The Keri offers זַכַּי instead of זַבַּי, probably from Ezra ii. 9, but on insufficient grounds, the name זַבַּי occurring also Ezra x. 28. Of the position of the house of Eliashib the high priest, we know nothing further than what appears from these verses (20 and 21), viz. that it stood at the northern part of the eastern side of Zion (not at the south-western angle of the temple area, as Bertheau supposes), and extended some considerable distance from south to north, the second length of wall built by Meremoth reaching from the door at its southern end to the תַּכְלִית, termination, at its northern end. On Meremoth, see rem. on ver. 4.—Ver. 22. Farther northwards repaired

the priests, the men of the district of Jordan. כִּכָּר does not, as Bertheau infers from xii. 28, signify the country round Jerusalem, but here, as there, the valley of the Jordan. See rem. on xii. 28 and on Gen. xiii. 10. Hence this verse informs us that priests were then dwelling in the valley of the Jordan, probably in the neighbourhood of Jericho. The length of wall built by these priests is not further particularized.—Ver. 23. Further on repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house, and Azariah the son of Maaseiah, by his house. Nothing further is known of these individuals.—Ver. 24. Next repaired Binnui the son of Henadad, a second portion from the house of Azariah, to the angle and to the corner; and further on (ver. 25) Palal the son of Uzzai, from opposite the angle and the high tower which stands out from the king's house by the court of the prison. We join הָעֶלְיוֹן to הַמִּגְדָּל, though it is also verbally admissible to combine it with בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ, "the tower which stands out from the king's upper house," because nothing is known of an upper and lower king's house. It would be more natural to assume (with Bertheau) that there was an upper and a lower tower at the court of the prison, but this is not implied by הָעֶלְיוֹן. The word means first, high, elevated, and its use does not assume the existence of a lower tower; while the circumstance that the same tower is in ver. 27 called the great (הַגָּדוֹל) tells in favour of the meaning high in the present case. The court of the prison was, according to Jer. xxxii. 2, in or near the king's house; it is also mentioned Jer. xxxii. 8, 12, xxxiii. 1, xxxvii. 21, xxxviii. 6, 13, 28, and xxxix. 14. But from none of these passages can it be inferred, as by Bertheau, that it was situate in the neighbourhood of the temple. His further remark, too, that the king's house is not the royal palace in the city of David, but an official edifice standing upon or near the temple area, and including the court of the prison with its towers, is entirely without foundation.[1] The royal palace lay, according

[1] Equally devoid of proof is the view of Ewald, Diestel (in Herzog's *Realencycl.* xiii. p. 325), Arnold, and others, that the royal palace stood upon Moriah or Ophel on the south side of the temple, in support of

to Josephus, *Ant.* viii. 5. 2, opposite the temple (*ἀντικρὺς ἔχων ναόν*), *i.e.* on the north-eastern side of Zion, and this is quite in accordance with the statements of this verse; for as it is not till ver. 27 that the description of the wall-building reaches the walls of Ophel, all the localities and buildings spoken of in vers. 24–27*a* must be sought for on the east side of Zion. The court of the prison formed, according to Eastern custom, part of the royal fortress upon Zion. The citadel had, moreover, a high tower. This is obvious from Cant. iv. 4, though the tower of David there mentioned, on which hung a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men, may not be identical with the tower of the king's house in this passage; from Mic. iv. 8, where the tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, is the tower of the royal citadel; and from Isa. xxxii. 14, where citadel and tower (בַּחַן, properly watch-tower) answer to the אַרְמוֹן of the royal citadel, which lay with its forts upon the hill of Zion. This high tower of the king's house, *i.e.* of the royal citadel, stood, according to our verses, in the immediate neighbourhood of the angle and the corner (הַפִּנָּה); for the section of wall which reached to the פִּנָּה lay opposite the angle and the high tower of the king's house. The wall here evidently formed a corner, running no longer from south to north, but turning eastwards, and passing over Ophel, the southern spur of Moriah. A length from this corner onwards was built by Pedaiah the son of Parosh; comp. Ezra ii. 3.

Vers. 26 and 27. Having now reached the place where the wall encloses Ophel, a remark is inserted, ver. 26, on the dwellings of the Nethinim, *i.e.* of the temple servants. The Nethinim dwelt in Ophel as far as (the place) before the water-gate toward the east, and the tower that standeth out. הַמִּגְדָּל הֵיצִי still depends upon עַד נֶגֶד. The water-gate towards the east, judging from xii. 37, lay beyond the south-eastern corner of the temple area. Bertheau, reasoning upon the view that the open space of the house of God, which Diestel adduces Neh. iii. 25. See the refutation of this view in the commentary on 1 Kings vii. 12 (note).

where Ezra spoke to the assembled people (Ezra x. 9), is identical with the open place before the water-gate mentioned Neh. viii. 1, 3, 16, places it on the east side of the temple area, near where the golden gate (*Rab er' Rahme*) now stands. This identity, however, cannot be proved; and even if it could, it would by no means follow that this open space lay on the east side of the temple area. And as little does it follow from xii. 37, as we shall show when we reach this passage. הַמִּגְדָּל הַיּוֹצֵא is said by Bertheau to have belonged perhaps to the water-gate towards the east, since, by reason of the statements contained in vers. 31 and 32, we must not seek it so far northwards on the east side of the temple area, as to combine it with the remains of a tower projecting seven and a half feet from the line of wall at the north-east corner, and described by Robinson (*Biblical Researches*, p. 226). But even if the tower in question must not be identified with these remains, it by no means follows that it stood in the neighbourhood of the golden gate. Even Arnold, in his work already cited, p. 636, remarks, in opposition to Bertheau's view, that "it is evident from the whole statement that the tower standing out from the king's house, in vers. 25, 26, and 27, is one and the same, and that Bertheau's view of our having here three separate towers can hardly be maintained," although he, as well as Bertheau, transposes both the king's house and the court of the prison to the south of the temple area. The similar appellation of this tower as הַיּוֹצֵא in the three verses speaks so decidedly for its identity, that very forcible reasons must be adduced before the opposite view can be adopted. In ver. 26 it is not a locality near the water-gate in the east which is indicated by הַמִּגְדָּל הַיּוֹצֵא, but the western boundary of the dwellings of the Nethinim lying opposite. They dwelt, that is, upon Ophel, southwards of the temple area, on a tract of land reaching from the water-gate in the east to opposite the outstanding tower of the royal citadel in the west, *i.e.* from the eastern slope of the ridge of Ophel down to the Tyropœan valley.—Ver. 27. After them the Tekoites repaired a second piece from opposite the great tower that standeth out to

the wall of Ophel. The great (high) tower of the king's house within the city wall being some distance removed therefrom, the portion of wall on the eastern ridge of Zion from south to north, reaching as far as the turning and the corner, and the commencement of the wall running from this corner eastwards, might both be designated as lying opposite to this tower. The portion mentioned in our verse passed along the Tyropœan valley as far as the wall of Ophel. King Jotham had built much on the wall of Ophel (2 Chron. xxvii. 3); and Manasseh had surrounded Ophel with a very high wall (2 Chron. xxxiii. 14), *i.e.* carried the wall round its western, southern, and eastern sides. On the north no wall was needed, Ophel being protected on this side by the southern wall of the temple area.

Vers. 28–32. The wall of Ophel and the eastern side of the temple area.—Ver. 28. Above the horse-gate repaired the priests, each opposite his own house. The site of the horse-gate appears, from 2 Chron. xxiii. 15 compared with 2 Kings xi. 6, to have been not far distant from the temple and the royal palace; while according to the present verse, compared with ver. 27, it stood in the neighbourhood of the wall of Ophel, and might well be regarded as even belonging to it. Hence we have, with Thenius, to seek it in the wall running over the Tyropœan valley, and uniting the eastern edge of Zion with the western edge of Ophel in the position of the present dung-gate (*Bab el Mogharibeh*). This accords with Jer. xxxi. 40, where it is also mentioned; and from which passage Bertheau infers that it stood at the western side of the valley of Kidron, below the east corner of the temple area. The particular מִמַּעְלָה, "from over," that is, above, is not to be understood of a point *northwards* of the horse-gate, but denotes the place where the wall, passing up from Zion to Ophel, ascended the side of Ophel east of the horse-gate. If, then, the priests here repaired each opposite his house, it is evident that a row of priests' dwellings were built on the western side of Ophel, south of the south-western extremity of the temple area.—Ver. 29. Zadok ben Immer (Ezra ii. 37) was probably the head of the priestly order of Immer.

Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah, the keeper of the east gate, can hardly be the same as the Shemaiah of the sons of Shecaniah entered among the descendants of David in 1 Chron. iii. 22. He might rather be regarded as a descendant of the Shemaiah of 1 Chron. xxvi. 6 sq., if the latter had not been enumerated among the sons of Obed-Edom, whose duty was to guard the south side of the temple. The east gate is undoubtedly the east gate of the temple, and not to be identified, as by Bertheau, with the water-gate towards the east (ver. 26). The place where Shemaiah repaired is not more precisely defined; nor can we infer, with Bertheau, from the circumstance of his being the keeper of the east gate, that he, together with his subordinate keepers, laboured at the fortification of this gate and its adjoining section of wall. Such a view is opposed to the order of the description, which passes on to a portion of the wall of Ophel; see rem. on ver. 31.—Ver. 30. אַחֲרִי here and in ver. 31 gives no appropriate sense, and is certainly only an error of transcription arising from the *scriptio defect.* אַחֲרָו. Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, are not further known. The name of Meshullam the son of Berechiah occurs previously in ver. 4; but the same individual can hardly be intended in the two verses, the one mentioned in ver. 4 being distinguished from others of the same name by the addition *ben* Meshezabeel. שֵׁנִי for שֵׁנִית (vers. 27, 24, and elsewhere) is grammatically incorrect, if not a mere error of transcription. נֶגֶד נִשְׁכָּתוֹ, before his dwelling. נִשְׁכָּה occurs only here and xiii. 7, and in the plural הַנִּשְׁכּוֹת, xii. 44; it seems, judging from the latter passage, only another form for לִשְׁכָּה, chamber; while in xiii. 7, on the contrary, נִשְׁכָּה is distinguished from לִשְׁכָּה, xiii. 4, 5. Its etymology is obscure. In xiii. 7 it seems to signify dwelling.—Ver. 31. הַצֹּרְפִי is not a proper name, but an appellative, son of the goldsmith, or perhaps better, member of the goldsmiths' guild, according to which הַצֹּרְפִי does not stand for הַצֹּרֵף, but designates those belonging to the goldsmiths. The statements, (he repaired) unto the house of the Nethinim, and of the merchants opposite the gate הַמִּפְקָד, and to the upper chamber

of the corner, are obscure. This rendering is according to the Masoretic punctuation; while the LXX., on the contrary, translate according to a different division of the words: Malchiah repaired as far as the house of the Nethinim, and the spice-merchants (repaired) opposite the gate Miphkad, and as far as the ascent of the corner. This translation is preferred by Bertheau, but upon questionable grounds. For the objection made by him, that if the other be adopted, either the same termination would be stated twice in different forms, or that two different terminations are intended, in which case it does not appear why one only should first be mentioned, and then the other also, is not of much importance. In ver. 24 also two terminations are mentioned, while in ver. 16 we have even three together. And why should not this occur here also? Of more weight is the consideration, that to follow the Masoretic punctuation is to make the house of the Nethinim and of the merchants but *one* building. Since, however, we know nothing further concerning the edifice in question, the subject is not one for discussion. The rendering of the LXX., on the other hand, is opposed by the weighty objection that there is a total absence of analogy for supplying וְאַחֲרָיו הֶחֱזִיקוּ; for throughout this long enumeration of forty-two sections of wall, the verb הֶחֱזִיק or הֶחֱזִיקוּ, or some corresponding verb, always stands either before or after every name of the builders, and even אַחֲרָיו is omitted only once (ver. 25). To the statement, "as far as the house of the Nethinim and the merchants," is appended the further definition: before (opposite) the gate הַמִּפְקָד. This word is reproduced in the LXX. as a proper name (*τοῦ Μαφεκάδ*), as is also בֵּית הַנְּתִינִים, *ἕως Βεθὰν Ναθινίμ*); in the Vulgate it is rendered appellatively: *contra portam judicialem;* and hence by Luther, *Rathsthor.* Thenius translates (*Stadt*, p. 9): the muster or punishment gate. מִפְקָד does not, however, signify punishment, although the view may be correct that the gate took the name הַמִּפְקָד from the מִפְקַד הַבַּיִת mentioned Ezek. xliii. 21, where the bullock of the sin-offering was to be burnt without the sanctuary; and it may be inferred from this passage that

near the temple of Solomon also there was an appointed place for burning the flesh of the sin-offering without the sanctuary. In Ezekiel's temple vision, this מִפְקַד הַבַּיִת is probably to be sought in the space behind the sanctuary, *i.e.* at the western end of the great square of five hundred cubits, set apart for the temple, and designated the *Gizra*, or separate place. In the temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel, however, the place in question could not have been situate at the west side of the temple, between the temple and the city, which lay opposite, but only on the south side of the temple area, outside the court, upon Ophel, where Thenius has delineated it in his plan of Jerusalem before the captivity. Whether it lay, however, at the south-western corner of the temple space (Thenius), or in the middle, or near the east end of the southern side of the external wall of the temple or temple court, can be determined neither from the present passage nor from Ezekiel's vision. Not from Ezek. xliii. 21, because the temple vision of this prophet is of an ideal character, differing in many points from the actual temple; not from the present passage, because the position of the house of the Nethinim and the merchants is unknown, and the definition נֶגֶד, (before) opposite the gate Miphkad, admits of several explanations. Thus much only is certain concerning this Miphkad gate,—on the one hand, from the circumstance that the wall was built before (נֶגֶד) or opposite this gate, on the other, from its omission in xii. 39, where the prison-gate is mentioned as being in this neighbourhood in its stead,—that it was not a gate of the city, but a gate through which the מִפְקָד was reached. Again, it is evident that the עֲלִיָּה of the corner which is mentioned as the length of wall next following, must be sought for at the south-eastern corner of the temple area. Hence the house of the temple servants and the merchants must have been situate south of this, on the eastern side of Ophel, where it descends into the valley of Kidron. עֲלִיַּת הַפִּנָּה, the upper chamber of the corner, was perhaps a *ὑπερῶον* of a corner tower, not at the north-eastern corner of the external circumvallation of the temple area (Bertheau), but at the

south-eastern corner, which was formed by the junction at this point of the wall of Ophel with the eastern wall of the temple area. If these views are correct, all the sections mentioned from ver. 28 to ver. 31 belong to the wall surrounding Ophel. This must have been of considerable length, for Ophel extended almost to the pool of Siloam, and was walled round on its western, southern, and eastern sides.—Ver. 32. The last section, between the upper chamber of the corner and the sheep-gate, was repaired by the goldsmiths and the merchants. This is the whole length of the east wall of the temple as far as the sheep-gate, at which this description began (ver. 1). The eastern wall of the temple area might have suffered less than the rest of the wall at the demolition of the city by the Chaldeans, or perhaps have been partly repaired at the time the temple was rebuilt, so that less restoration was now needed.

A survey of the whole enumeration of the gates and lengths of wall now restored and fortified, commencing and terminating as it does at the sheep-gate, and connecting almost always the several portions either built or repaired by the words (יִרְם) עַל יָדוֹ or אַחֲרָיו, gives good grounds for inferring that in the forty-two sections, including the gates, particularized vers. 1–32, we have a description of the entire fortified wall surrounding the city, without a single gap. In ver. 7, indeed, as we learn by comparing it with xii. 29, the mention of the gate of Ephraim is omitted, and in 30 or 31, to judge by xii. 39, the prison-gate; while the wall lying between the dung-gate and the fountain-gate is not mentioned between vers. 14 and 15. The non-mention, however, of these gates and this portion of wall may be explained by the circumstance, that these parts of the fortification, having remained unharmed, were in need of no restoration. We read, it is true, in 2 Kings xxv. 10 and 11, that Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard of Nebuchadnezzar, burnt the king's house and all the great houses of the city, and that the army of the Chaldees broke down or destroyed (נתץ) the walls of Jerusalem round about; but these words must not be so pressed as to make them express a total

levelling of the surrounding wall. The wall was only so far demolished as to be incapable of any longer serving as a defence to the city. And this end was fully accomplished when it was partially demolished in several places, because the portions of wall, and even the towers and gates, still perhaps left standing, could then no longer afford any protection to the city. The danger that the Jews might easily refortify the city unless the fortifications were entirely demolished, was sufficiently obviated by the carrying away into captivity of the greater part of the population. This explains the fact that nothing is said in this description of the restoration of the towers of Hananeel and Hammeah (ver. 11), and that certain building parties repaired very long lengths of wall, as *e.g.* the 1000 cubits between the fountain-gate and the dung-gate, while others had very short portions appointed them. The latter was especially the case with those who built on the east side of Zion, because this being the part at which King Zedekiah fled from the city, the wall may here have been levelled to the ground.

From the consideration of the course of the wall, so far as the description in the present chapter enables us to determine it with tolerable certainty, and a comparison with the procession of the two bands of singers round the restored wall in chap. xii. 31–40, which agrees in the chief points with this description, it appears that the wall on the northern side of the city, before the captivity, coincided in the main with the northern wall of modern Jerusalem, being only somewhat shorter at the north-eastern and north-western corners; and that it ran from the valley (or Jaffa) gate by the tower of furnaces, the gate of Ephraim, the old gate, and the fish-gate to the sheep-gate, maintaining, on the whole, the same direction as the second wall described by Josephus (*bell. Jud.* v. 4. 2.) In many places remains of this wall, which bear testimony to their existence at a period long prior to Josephus, have recently been discovered. In an angle of the present wall near the Latin monastery are found "remains of a wall built of mortice-edged stones, near which lie blocks so large that we at first took them for

portions of the natural rock, but found them on closer inspection to be morticed stones removed from their place. A comparatively large number of stones, both in the present wall between the north-west corner of the tower and the Damascus gate, and in the adjoining buildings, are morticed and hewn out of ancient material, and we can scarcely resist the impression that this must have been about the direction of an older wall." So Wolcott and Tipping in Robinson's *New Biblical Researches.* Still nearer to the gate, about three hundred feet west of it, Dr. Wilson remarks (*Lands of the Bible*, i. p. 421), "that the wall, to some considerable height above its foundation, bears evidence, by the size and peculiarity of its stones, to its high antiquity," and attributes this portion to the old second wall (see Robinson). "Eastward, too, near the Damascus gate, and even near the eastern tower, are found very remarkable remains of Jewish antiquity. The similarity of these remains of wall to those surrounding the site of the temple is most surprising" (Tobler, *Dritte Wand.* p. 339). From these remains, and the intimations of Josephus concerning the second wall, Robinson justly infers that the ancient wall must have run from the Damascus gate to a place in the neighbourhood of the Latin monastery, and that its course thence must have been nearly along the road leading northwards from the citadel to the Latin monastery, while between the monastery and the Damascus gate it nearly coincided with the present wall. Of the length from the Damascus gate to the sheep-gate no certain indications have as yet been found. According to Robinson's ideas, it probably went from the Damascus gate, at first eastwards in the direction of the present wall, and onwards to the highest point of Bezetha; but then bent, as Bertheau supposes, in a south-easterly direction, and ran to a point in the present wall lying north-east of the Church of St. Anne, and thence directly south towards the north-east corner of the temple area. On the south side, on the contrary, the whole of the hill of Zion belonged to the ancient city; and the wall did not, like the modern, pass across the middle of Zion, thus

excluding the southern half of this hill from the city, but went on the west, south, and south-east, round the edge of Zion, so that the city of Zion was as large again as that portion of modern Jerusalem lying on the hill of Zion, and included the sepulchres of David and of the kings of Judah, which are now outside the city wall. Tobler (*Dritte Wand.* p. 336) believes that a trace of the course of the ancient wall has been discovered in the cutting in the rock recently uncovered outside the city, where, at the building of the Anglican Episcopal school, which lies two hundred paces westward under *En-Nebi-Daûd*, and the levelling of the garden and cemetery, were found edged stones lying scattered about, and "remarkable artificial walls of rock," whose direction shows that they must have supported the oldest or first wall of the city; for they are just so far distant from the level of the valley, that the wall could, or rather must, have stood there. "And," continues Tobler, "not only so, but the course of the wall of rock is also to a certain extent parallel with that of the valley, as must be supposed to be the case with a rocky foundation to a city wall." Finally, the city was bounded on its western and eastern sides by the valleys of Gihon and Jehoshaphat respectively.

Vers. 33–38 (chap. iv. 1–6, A. V.). *The ridicule of Tobiah and Sanballat.*—Vers. 33 and 34. As soon as Sanballat heard that we were building (בֹּנִים, *partic.*, expresses not merely the resolve or desire to build, but also the act of commencing), he was wroth and indignant, and vented his anger by ridiculing the Jews, saying before his brethren, *i.e.* the rulers of his people, and the army of Samaria (חֵיל, like Esth. i. 3, 2 Kings xviii. 17),—in other words, saying publicly before his associates and subordinates,—"What do these feeble Jews? will they leave it to themselves? will they sacrifice? will they finish it to-day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps that are burned?" מָה עֹשִׂים, not, What will they do? (Bertheau), for the participle is present, and does not stand for the future; but, What are they doing? The form אֲמֻלָל, withered, powerless, occurs here only. The subject of

the four succeeding interrogative sentences must be the same. And this is enough to render inadmissible the explanation offered by older expositors of הֵיַעְזְבוּ לָהֶם: Will they leave to them, viz. will the neighbouring nations or the royal prefects allow them to build? Here, as in the case of the following verbs, the subject can only be the Jews. Hence Ewald seeks, both here and in ver. 8, to give to the verb עָזַב the meaning to shelter: Will they make a shelter for themselves, *i.e.* will they fortify the town? But this is quite arbitrary. Bertheau more correctly compares the passage, Ps. x. 14, עָזְבָנוּ עַל אֱלֹהִים, we leave it to God; but incorrectly infers that here also we must supply עַל אלהים, and that, Will they leave to themselves? means, Will they commit the matter to God? This mode of completing the sense, however, can by no means be justified; and Bertheau's conjecture, that the Jews now assembling in Jerusalem, before commencing the work itself, instituted a devotional solemnity which Sanballat was ridiculing, is incompatible with the correct rendering of the participle. עָזַב construed with לְ means to leave, to commit a matter to any one, like Ps. x. 14, and the sense is: Will they leave the building of the fortified walls to themselves? *i.e.* Do they think they are able with their poor resources to carry out this great work? This is appropriately followed by the next question: Will they sacrifice? *i.e.* bring sacrifices to obtain God's miraculous assistance? The ridicule lies in the circumstance that Sanballat neither credited the Jews with ability to carry out the work, nor believed in the overruling providence of the God whom the Jews worshipped, and therefore casts scorn by הֵיִזְבְּחוּ both upon the faith of the Jews in their God and upon the living God Himself. As these two questions are internally connected, so also are the two following, by which Sanballat casts a doubt upon the possibility of the work being executed. Will they finish (the work) on this day, *i.e.* to-day, directly? The meaning is: Is this a matter to be as quickly executed as if it were the work of a single day? The last question is: Have they even the requisite materials? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish which are burnt?

The building-stone of Jerusalem was limestone, which gets softened by fire, losing its durability, and, so to speak, its vitality. This explains the use of the verb חָיָה, to revive, to give fresh vital power. To revive burnt stones means, to bestow strength and durability upon the softened crumbled stones, to fit the stones into a new building (Ges. *Lex.*). The construction וְהַמָּה שְׂרֻפוֹת is explained by the circumstance that אֲבָנִים is by its form masculine, but by its meaning feminine, and that הַמָּה agrees with the form אבנים.—Ver. 35. Tobiah the Ammonite, standing near Sanballat, and joining in in his raillery, adds: "Even that which they build, if a fox go up he will break their stone wall;" *i.e.*, even if they build up walls, the light footsteps of the stealthy fox will suffice to tread them down, and to make breaches in their work.—Vers. 36 and 37. When Nehemiah heard of these contemptuous words, he committed the matter to God, entreating Him to hear how they (the Jews) were become a scorn, *i.e.* a subject of contempt, to turn the reproach of the enemies upon their own head, and to give them up to plunder in a land of captivity, *i.e.* in a land in which they would dwell as captives. He supplicates, moreover, that God would not cover, *i.e.* forgive (Ps. lxxxv. 3), their iniquity, and that their sin might not be blotted out from before His face, *i.e.* might not remain unpunished, "for they have provoked to wrath before the builders," *i.e.* openly challenged the wrath of God, by despising Him before the builders, so that they heard it. הִכְעִיסוּ without an object, spoken of provoking the divine wrath by grievous sins; comp. 2 Kings xxi. 6, with 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6.—Ver. 38. The Jews continued to build without heeding the ridicule of their enemies, "and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof," *i.e.* the wall was so far repaired throughout its whole circumference, that no breach or gap was left up to half its height; "and the people had a heart to work," *i.e.* the restoration went on so quickly because the people had a mind to work.

Chap. iv. *The attempts of the enemies to hinder the work by force, and Nehemiah's precautions against them.*—Vers. 1–8. When the enemies learnt that the restoration of the wall

was evidently getting on, they conspired together to fight against Jerusalem (vers. 1 and 2). The Jews then prayed to God, and set a watch (ver. 3). When the courage of the people began to fail, and their enemies spread a report of sudden attack being imminent, Nehemiah furnished the people on the wall with weapons, and encouraged the nobles and rulers to fight boldly for their brethren, their children, and their possessions (vers. 4–8). The Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites are here enumerated as enemies, besides Sanballat and Tobiah (vers. 2, 10, 19). The Arabians were incited to hostilities against the Jews by Geshem (11, 19), and the Ammonites by Tobiah; the Ashdodites, the inhabitants of the city and territory of Ashdod, in the coast district of Philistia, were perhaps encouraged to renew their old hatred of Judah by Sanballat the Horonite. When these enemies heard that the walls of Jerusalem were bandaged, *i.e.* that the breaches and damages in the wall were repaired, they were filled with wrath. The biblical expression, to lay on a bandage, here and 2 Chron. xxiv. 13, Jer. viii. 22, xxx. 17, xxxiii. 6, is derived from the healing of wounds by means of a bandage, and is explained by the sentence following: that the breaches began to be closed or stopped. The enemies conspired together to march against Jerusalem and injure it. לִי, because the people of the town are meant. תּוֹעָה occurs but once more, viz. in Isa. xxxii. 6, in the sense of error; here it signifies *calamities*, for, as Aben Ezra well remarks, *qui in angustiis constitutus est, est velut errans, qui nescit quid agat quove se vertat.*—Ver. 3. The Jews, on the other hand, made preparation by prayer, and by setting a watch (מִשְׁמָר, comp. vii. 3, xiii. 30) day and night. *We*, viz. Nehemiah and the superintendents of the work, prayed and set a watch עֲלֵיהֶם, against them, to ward off a probable attack. מִפְּנֵיהֶם, for fear of them, comp. ver. 10.—Ver. 4. The placing of the watch day and night, and the continuous labour, must have pressed heavily upon the people; therefore Judah said: "The strength of the bearers of burdens fails, and there is much rubbish; we are not able to build the wall." That is to say, the labour is beyond our

power, we cannot continue it.—Ver. 5. Their discouragement was increased by the words of their enemies, who said: They (the Jews) shall not know nor see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.—Ver. 6. When, therefore, the Jews who dwelt near them, *i.e.* in the neighbourhood of the adversaries, and heard their words, came to Jerusalem, "and said to us ten times (*i.e.* again and again), that from all places ye must return to us, then I placed," etc. Jews came from all places to Jerusalem, and summoned those who were building there to return home, for adversaries were surrounding the community on all sides: Sanballat and the Samaritans on the north, the Ammonites on the east, the Arabians on the south, and the Philistines (Ashdodites) on the west. אֲשֶׁר before תָּשׁוּבוּ introduces their address, instead of כִּי; being thus used, *e.g.*, before longer speeches, 1 Sam. xv. 20, 2 Sam. i. 4; and for כִּי generally, throughout the later books, in conformity to Aramæan usage. "Return to us" (שׁוּב עַל, as in 2 Chron. xxx. 9, for שׁוּב אֶל), said the Jews who came from all quarters to Jerusalem to their fellow-townsmen, who from Jericho, Gibeon, and Tekoa (comp. iii. 2, 3, 5, 7) were working on the wall of Jerusalem. These words express their fear lest those who were left at home, especially the defenceless women, children, and aged men, should be left without protection against the attacks of enemies, if their able-bodied men remained any longer in Jerusalem to take part in the building of the wall.—Ver. 7*a* is hardly intelligible. We translate it: Then I placed at the lowest places behind the wall, at the dried-up places, I (even) placed the people, after their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. מִתַּחְתִּיּוֹת לַמָּקוֹם is a stronger expression for מִתַּחַת לַמָּקוֹם when used to indicate position, and מִן points out the direction. The sense is: at the lowest places from behind the wall. בַּצְּחִחִים gives the nature of the places where the people were placed with arms. צְחִיחַ and צְחִיחָה mean a dry or bare place exposed to the heat of the sun: bare, uncovered, or empty places, perhaps bare hills, whence approaching foes might be discerned at a distance. The second וָאַעֲמִיד is but

a reiteration of the verb, for the sake of combining it with its object, from which the וָאַעֲמִיד at the beginning of the verse was too far removed by the circumstantial description of the locality.[1]—Ver. 8. "And I looked, and rose up, and said." These words can only mean: When I saw the people thus placed with their weapons, I went to them, and said to the nobles, etc., "Be not afraid of them (the enemies); remember the Lord, the great and the terrible," who will fight for you against your enemies (Deut. iii. 22, xx. 3, and xxxi. 6), "and fight ye for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses," whom the enemies would destroy.

Vers. 9–17. Thus was the design of the enemy circumvented, and the Jews returned to their work on the wall, which they had forsaken to betake themselves to their weapons. The manner in which they resumed their building work was, that one half held weapons, and the other half laboured with weapons in hand.—Ver. 9. When our enemies heard that it (their intention) was known to us, and (that) God had brought their counsel to nought (through the measures with which we had met it), we returned all of us to the wall, every one to his work. The conclusion does not begin till וַנָּשׁוּב, וַיָּפֶר הָאֱלֹהִים belonging to the premiss, in continuation of כִּי נוֹדַע.—Ver. 10. From that day the half of my servants wrought at the work, and the other half of them held the

[1] Bertheau considers the text corrupt, regarding the word מִתַּחְתִּיּוֹת as the object of אַעֲמִיד, and alters it into מַחֲשָׁבוֹת or חֻשָּׁבוֹת, engines for hurling missiles (2 Chron. xxvi. 15), or into מְטַחֲוִיּוֹת (a word of his own invention), instruments for hurling. But not only is this conjecture critically inadmissible, it also offers no appropriate sense. The LXX. reads the text as we do, and merely renders בצחחיים conjecturally by *ἐν τοῖς σκεπεινοῖς*. Besides, it is not easy to see how חשבנות could have arisen from a false reading of מחחתיות; and it should be remembered that מַחֲשָׁבוֹת does not mean a machine for hurling, while מטחויות is a mere fabrication. To this must be added, that such machines are indeed placed *upon* the walls of a fortress to hurl down stones and projectiles upon assaulting foes, and not *behind* the walls, where they could only be used to demolish the walls, and so facilitate the taking of the town by the enemy.

spears and shields, the bows and the armour, *i.e.* carried the arms. The servants of Nehemiah are his personal retinue, ver. 17, v. 10, 16, namely, Jews placed at his disposal as Pechah for official purposes. The ו before וְהָרְמָחִים was probably placed before this word, instead of before the הַמְּנִנִים following, by a clerical error; for if it stood before the latter also, it might be taken in the sense of *et—et.* מַחֲזִיקִים, instead of being construed with בְּ, is in the accusative, as also in ver. 11, and even in Jer. vi. 23 and Isa. xli. 9, 13. Unnecessary and unsuitable is the conjecture of Bertheau, that the word בְּרָמְחִים originally stood after מַחֲזִיקִים, and that a fresh sentence begins with וְהָרְמָחִים: and the other half held the spears; and the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the armour, and the rulers, were behind the whole house of Judah,—a strange combination, which places the weapons and rulers behind the house of Judah. Besides, of the circumstance of the weapons being placed behind the builders, so that they might at any moment seize them, we not only read nothing in the text; but in vers. 11 and 12 just the contrary, viz. that the builders wrought with one hand, and with the other held a weapon. "The rulers were behind all the house of Judah," *i.e.* each was behind his own people who were employed on the work, to encourage them in their labour, and, in case of attack, to lead them against the enemy.—In ver. 11 הַבּוֹנִים בְּחוֹמָה is prefixed after the manner of a title. With respect to those who built the wall, both the bearers of burdens were lading with the one hand of each workman, and holding a weapon with the other, and the builders were building each with his sword girt on his side. The ו prefixed to הַנּשְׂאִים and הַבֹּנִים means both; and נֹשֵׂא בַּסֶּבֶל, bearers of burdens, who cleared away the rubbish, and worked as labourers. These, at all events, could do their work with one hand, which would suffice for emptying rubbish into baskets, and for carrying material in handle baskets. בְּאַחַת יָדוֹ, literally, with the one (namely) of his hands that was doing the work. The suffix of יָדוֹ points to the genitive following. אַחַת וְאַחַת, the one and the other hand. הַשֶּׁלַח, not a missile, but a weapon that was stretched out, held forth, usually a sword or some

defensive weapon: see rem. on Josh. ii. 8, 2 Chron. xxxii. 5. The builders, on the contrary, needed both hands for their work: hence they had swords girt to their sides. "And he that sounded the trumpet was beside me." Nehemiah, as superintendent of the work, stood at the head of his servants, ready to ward off any attack; hence the trumpeter was beside him, to be able to give to those employed on the wall the signal for speedy muster in case danger should threaten. —Ver. 13 sq. Hence he said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, *i.e.* all employed in building, "The work is much (great) and wide, and we are separated upon the wall one far from another; in what place ye hear the sound of the trumpet, assemble yourselves to me: our God will fight for us."—In ver. 15 the whole is summed up, and for this purpose the matter of ver. 10 is briefly repeated, to unite with it the further statement that they so laboured from early morning till late in the evening. "We (Nehemiah and his servants) laboured in the work, and half of them (of the servants) held the spears from the grey of dawn till the stars appeared."—Ver. 16. He took, moreover, a further precaution: he said to the people (*i.e.* to the labourers on the wall, and not merely to the warriors of the community, as Bertheau supposes): Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, *i.e.* to remain together during the night also, and not be scattered through the surrounding district, "that they may be guardianship for us by night and labour by day." The abstracts, guardianship and labour, stand for the concretes, guards and labourers. As לָנוּ, *to us*, refers to the whole community separated on the walls, so is אִישׁ וְנַעֲרוֹ to be understood of all the workers, and not of the fighting men only. From אִישׁ וְנַעֲרוֹ it only appears that the fathers of families and master builders had servants with them as labourers.—Ver. 17. Nehemiah, moreover, and his brethren (his kinsmen and the members of his house), and his servants, and the men of the guard in his retinue, were constantly in their clothes ("not putting off our clothes" to rest). The last words, אִישׁ שִׁלְחוֹ הַמַּיִם, are very obscure, and give no tolerable sense, whether we explain הַמַּיִם of water for drinking or washing. Luther trans-

lates, Every one left off washing; but the words, Every one's weapon was water, can never bear this sense. Roediger, in Gesen. *Thes. s.v.* שֶׁלַח, seeks to alter המים into בְּיָדוֹ, to which Böttcher (*N. krit. Aehrenl.* iii. p. 219) rightly objects: "how could בְּיָדוֹ have been altered into הַמַּיִם, or הַמַּיִם have got into the text at all, if some portion of it had not been originally there? What this בְּיָדוֹ expresses, would be far more definitely given with the very slight correction of changing the closing ם of הַמַּיִם, and reading המינו = הַמִּינוֹ (comp. 2 Sam. xiv. 19); thus each had taken his missile on the right (in his right hand), naturally that he might be ready to discharge it in case of a hostile attack." This conjecture seems to us a happy emendation of the unmeaning text, since נו might easily have been changed into ם; and we only differ in this matter from Böttcher, by taking שֶׁלַח in its only legitimate meaning of weapon, and translating the words: And each laid his weapon on the right, viz. when he laid himself down at night to rest in his clothes, to be ready for fighting at the first signal from the watch.

CHAP. V.—ABOLITION OF USURY—NEHEMIAH'S UNSELFISHNESS.

The events related in this and the following chapter also occurred during the building of the wall. Zealously as the rulers and richer members of the community, following the example of Nehemiah, were carrying on this great undertaking by all the means in their power, the work could not fail to be a heavy burden to the poorer classes, who found it very difficult to maintain their families in these expensive times, especially since they were still oppressed by wealthy usurers. Hence great discontent arose, which soon vented itself in loud complaints. Those who had no property demanded corn for the support of their numerous families (ver. 2); others had been obliged to pledge their fields and vineyards, some to procure corn for their hunger, some to be able to pay the king's tribute; and these complained that they must now give their sons and daughters to bondage (vers.

3–5). When these complaints came to the ears of Nehemiah, he was angry with the rulers; and calling an assembly, he set before them the great injustice of usury, and called upon them to renounce it, to restore to their brethren their mortgaged lands, and to give them what they had borrowed (vers. 6–11). His address made the impression desired. The noble and wealthy resolved to perform what was required; whereupon Nehemiah caused them to take a solemn oath to this effect, indicating by a symbolical act that the heavy wrath of God would fall upon all who should fail to act according to their promise. To this the assembly expressed their Amen, and the people carried out the resolution (vers. 12, 13). Nehemiah then declared with what unselfishness he had exercised his office of governor, for the sake of lightening the heavy burden laid upon the people (vers. 14–19).

Vers. 1–5. *The people complain of oppression.*—Ver. 1. There arose a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews, *i.e.*, as appears from what follows (ver. 7), against the nobles and rulers, therefore against the richer members of the community. This cry is more particularly stated in vers. 2–5, where the malcontents are divided into three classes by יֵשׁ, vers. 2, 3, 4.—Ver. 2. There were some who said: Our sons and our daughters are many, and we desire to receive corn, that we may eat and live. These were the words of those workers who had no property. נִקְחָה (from לָקַח), not to take by force, but only to desire that corn may be provided.—Ver. 3. Others, who were indeed possessed of fields, vineyards, and houses, had been obliged to mortgage them, and could now reap nothing from them. עֹרְבִים, to give as a pledge, to mortgage. The use of the participle denotes the continuance of the transaction, and is not to be rendered, We must mortgage our fields to procure corn; but, We have been obliged to mortgage them, and we desire to receive corn for our hunger, because of the dearth. For (1) the context shows that the act of mortgaging had already taken place, and was still continuing in force (we have been obliged to pledge them, and

they are still pledged); and (2) נִקְחָה must not be taken here in a different sense from ver. 2, but means, We desire that corn may be furnished us, because of the dearth; not, that we may not be obliged to mortgage our lands, but because they are already mortgaged. בָּרָעָב, too, does not necessarily presuppose a scarcity in consequence of a failure of crops or other circumstances, but only declares that they who had been obliged to pledge their fields were suffering from hunger.—Ver. 4. Others, again, complained: We have borrowed money for the king's tribute upon our fields and vineyards. לָוָה means to be dependent, *nexum esse*, and transitively to make dependent, like מָלֵא, to be full, and to make full: We have made our fields and our vineyards answerable for money for the king's tribute (Bertheau), *i.e.* we have borrowed money upon our fields for . . . This they could only do by pledging the crops of these lands, or at least such a portion of their crops as might equal the sum borrowed; comp. the law, Lev. xxv. 14–17.—Ver. 5. "And now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, and our sons as their sons; and lo, we are obliged to bring our sons and our daughters into bondage, and some of our daughters are already brought into bondage; and we have no power to alter this, and our fields and vineyards belong to others." "Our brethren" are the richer Jews who had lent money upon pledges, and בְּנֵיהֶם are their sons. The sense of the first half of the verse is: We are of one flesh and blood with these rich men, *i.e.*, as Ramb. already correctly explains it: *non sumus deterioris conditionis quam tribules nostri divites, nec tamen nostræ inopiæ ex lege divina Deut.* xv. 7, 8, *subvenitur, nisi maximo cum fœnore.* The law not only allowed to lend to the poor on a pledge (Deut. xv. 8), but also permitted Israelites, if they were poor, to sell themselves (Lev. xxv. 39), and also their sons and daughters, to procure money. It required, however, that they who were thus sold should not be retained as slaves, but set at liberty without ransom, either after seven years or at the year of jubilee (Lev. xxv. 39–41; Ex. xxii. 2 sq.). It is set forth as a special hardship in this verse that some of their daughters were brought into bondage for maid-servants.

אֵין לְאֵל יָדֵנוּ, literally, our hand is not to God, *i.e.* the power to alter it is not in our hand; on this figure of speech, comp. Gen. xxxi. 29. The last clause gives the reason: Our fields and our vineyards belonging to others, what they yield does not come to us, and we are not in a position to be able to put an end to the sad necessity of selling our daughters for servants.

Vers. 6–13. *The abolition of usury.*—Ver. 6. Nehemiah was very angry at this complaint and these things, *i.e.* the injustice which had been brought to his knowledge.—Ver. 7. "And my heart took counsel upon it (יִמְלֹךְ according to the Chaldee use of מְלַךְ, Dan. iv. 24), and I contended with the nobles and rulers, and said to them, Ye exact usury every one of his brother." נָשָׁא בְּ means to lend to any one, and מַשָּׁא, also מַשָּׂאָה, Deut. xxiv. 10, Prov. xxii. 26, and מַשֶּׁה, is the thing lent, the loan, what one borrows from or lends to another. Consequently נָשָׁא מַשָּׁא is to lend some one a loan; comp. Deut. xxiv. 10. This does not seem to suit this verse. For Nehemiah cannot reproach the nobles for lending loans, when he and his servants had, according to ver. 10, done so likewise. Hence the injustice of the transaction which he rebukes must be expressed in the emphatic precedence given to מַשָּׁא. Bertheau accordingly regards מַשָּׁא not as the accusative of the object, but as an independent secondary accusative in the sense of: for the sake of demanding a pledge, ye lend. But this rendering can be neither grammatically nor lexically justified. In the first respect it is opposed by הַשָּׁא מַשָּׂאָה, Deut. xxiv. 10, which shows that מַשָּׁא in conjunction with נָשָׁא is the accusative of the object; in the other, by the constant use of מַשָּׁא in all passages in which it occurs to express a loan, not a demand for a pledge. From Ex. xxii. 24, where it is said, "If thou lend money (תַּלְוֶה) to the poor, thou shalt not be to him כְּנֹשֶׁה, shalt not lay upon him usury," it is evident that נֹשֶׁה is one who lends money on usury, or carries on the business of a money-lender. This evil secondary meaning of the word is here strongly marked by the emphatic præposition of מַשָּׁא; hence Nehemiah is speaking of those who practise usury. "And I ap-

pointed a great assembly on their account," to put a stop to the usury and injustice by a public discussion of the matter. עֲלֵיהֶם, not against them (the usurers), but on their account. —Ver. 8. In this assembly he reproached them with the injustice of their behaviour. "We" (said he) "have, after our ability, redeemed our brethren the Jews which were sold unto the heathen; yet ye would sell your brethren, and they are to be sold to us." *We* (*i.e.* Nehemiah and the Jews living in exile, who were like-minded with him) have bought, in contrast to *ye* sell. They had redeemed their Jewish brethren who were sold to the heathen. כְּדֵי בְנוּ for כְּדֵי אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ, *i.e.*, not according to the full number of those who were among us, meaning as often as a sale of this kind occurred (Bertheau); for דֵּי does not mean completeness, multitude, but only sufficiency, supply, adequacy of means (Lev. xxv. 26); hence כְּדֵי בְנוּ is: according to the means that we had: *secundum sufficientiam vel facultatem, quæ in nobis est* (Ramb.), or *secundum possibilitatem nostram* (Vulg.). The contrast is still more strongly expressed by the placing of גַּם before אַתֶּם, so that וְגַם acquires the meaning of nevertheless (Ewald, § 354, *a*). The sale of their brethren for bond-servants was forbidden by the law, Lev. xxv. 42. The usurers had nothing to answer to this reproach. "They held their peace, and found no word," *sc.* in justification of their proceedings.—Ver. 9. Nehemiah, moreover, continued (ויאמר, the Chethiv, is evidently a clerical error for וְאֹמַר, for the Niphal וַיֵּאָמֶר does not suit): "The thing ye do is not good: ought ye not (= ye surely ought) to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?" *i.e.*, we ought not, by harsh and unloving conduct towards our brethren, to give our enemies occasion to calumniate us.—Ver. 10. "I, likewise my brethren and my servants (comp. iv. 17), have lent them money and corn; let us, I pray, remit (not ask back) this loan!" The participle נֹשִׁים says: we are those who have lent. Herewith he connects the invitation, ver. 11: "Restore unto them, I pray you, even this day (כַּהַיּוֹם, about this day, *i.e.* even to-day, 1 Sam. ix. 13), their fields, their vineyards, their olive gardens, and their houses,

and the hundredth of the money, and of the corn, wine, and oil, which you have lent them." Nehemiah requires, 1*st*, that those who held the lands of their poorer brethren in pledge should restore them their property without delay: 2*d*, that they should remit to their debtors all interest owing on money, corn, etc. that had been lent; not, as the words have been frequently understood, that they should give back to their debtors such interest as they had already received. That the words in ver. 11*a* bear the former, and not the latter signification, is obvious from the reply, ver. 12, of those addressed: "We will restore, *sc.* their lands, etc., and will not require of them, *sc.* the hundredth; so will we do as thou sayest." Hence we must not translate אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם נֹשִׁים בָּהֶם, "which you had taken from them as interest" (de Wette), —a translation which, moreover, cannot be justified by the usage of the language, for נָשָׂה בְּ does not mean to take interest from another, to lend to another on interest. The אֲשֶׁר relates not to מְאַת, but to הַנָּתֵן . . . וְהַיַּצָּהָר; and הָשִׁיב, to restore, to make good, is used of both the transactions in question, meaning in the first clause the restoration of the lands retained as pledges, and in the second, the remission (the non-requirement) of the hundredth. The hundredth taken as interest is probably, like the *centesima* of the Romans, to be understood of a monthly payment. One per cent. per month was a very heavy interest, and one which, in the case of the poor, might be exorbitant. The law, moreover, forbade the taking of any usury from their brethren, their poor fellow-countrymen, Ex. xxii. 25 and Lev. xxv. 36 sq. When the creditors had given the consent required, Nehemiah called the priests, and made them (the creditors) swear to do according to this promise, *i.e.* conscientiously to adhere to their agreement. Nehemiah obtained the attendance of the priests, partly for the purpose of giving solemnity to the oath now taken, and partly to give to the declaration made in the presence of the priests legal validity for judicial decisions.—Ver. 13. To make the agreement thus sworn to still more binding, Nehemiah confirmed the proceeding by a symbolical action: Also I shook

my lap, and said, So may God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth (fulfilleth) not this promise, and thus may he be shaken out and emptied. חֹצֶן means the lap of the garment, in which things are carried (Isa. xlix. 22), where alone the word is again found. The symbolical action consisted in Nehemiah's gathering up his garment as if for the purpose of carrying something, and then shaking it out with the words above stated, which declared the meaning of the act. The whole congregation said Amen, and praised the Lord, *sc.* for the success with which God had blessed his efforts to help the poor. And the people did according to this promise, *i.e.* the community acted in accordance with the agreement entered into.

Vers. 14–19. *Nehemiah's unselfish conduct.*—The transaction above related gave Nehemiah occasion to speak in his narrative of the unselfishness with which he had filled the office of governor, and of the personal sacrifices he had made for the good of his fellow-countrymen.—Ver. 14. The statement following is compared with the special occurrence preceding it by גַּם. As in this occurrence he had used his credit to do away with the oppression of the people by wealthy usurers, so also had he shown himself unselfish during his whole official career, and shunned no sacrifice by which he might lighten the burdens that lay upon his fellow-countrymen. "From the time that he appointed me to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two-and-thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, I and my servants have not eaten the bread of the governor." The subject of צִוָּה is left undefined, but is obviously King Artaxerxes. פַּחֲתָם, their (the Jews') governor. This he was from the twentieth (comp. ii. 1) to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, in which, according to xiii. 6, he again visited the court of this monarch, returning after a short interval to Jerusalem, to carry out still further the work he had there undertaken. "The bread of the Pechah" is, according to ver. 15, the food and wine with which the community had to furnish him. The meaning is: During this whole period I drew no allow-

ances from the people.—Ver. 15. The former governors who had been before me in Jerusalem—Zerubbabel and his successors—had received allowances, הִכְבִּידוּ עַל הָעָם, had burdened the people, and had taken of them (their fellow-countrymen) for bread and wine (*i.e.* for the requirements of their table), "afterwards in money forty shekels." Some difficulty is presented by the word אַחַר, which the LXX. render by ἔσχατον, the Vulgate *quotidie*. The meaning *ultra, præter*, besides (Ew. § 217, 1), can no more be shown to be that of אַחַר, than *over* can, which Bertheau attempts to justify by saying that after forty shekels follow forty-one, forty-two, etc. The interpretation, too: reckoned after money (Böttcher, *de Inferis*, § 409, *b*, and *N. krit. Aehrenl.* iii. p. 219), cannot be supported by the passages quoted in its behalf, since in none of them is אַחַר used *de illo quod normæ est*, but has everywhere fundamentally the local signification *after*. Why, then, should not אַחַר be here used adverbially, *afterwards*, and express the thought that this money was afterwards demanded from the community for the expenses of the governor's table? "Even their servants bare rule over the people." שָׁלַט denotes arbitrary, oppressive rule, abuse of power for extortions, etc. Nehemiah, on the contrary, had not thus acted because of the fear of God.—Ver. 16. "And also I took part in the work of this wall; neither bought we any land, and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work.", הֶחָזִיק בְּ = הֶחֱזִיק יָד בְּ, to set the hand to something; here, to set about the work. The manner in which Nehemiah, together with his servants, set themselves to the work of wall-building is seen from iv. 10, 12, 15, and 17. Neither have we (I and my servants) bought any land, *i.e.* have not by the loan of money and corn acquired mortgages of land; comp. ver. 10.—Ver. 17. But this was not all; for Nehemiah had also fed a considerable number of persons at his table, at his own expense. "And the Jews, both one hundred and fifty rulers, and the men who came to us from the nations round about us, were at my table," *i.e.* were my guests. The hundred and fifty rulers, comp. ii. 16, were the heads of the different houses of Judah collectively. These were al-

ways guests at Nehemiah's table, as were also such Jews as dwelt among the surrounding nations, when they came to Jerusalem.—Ver. 18. "And that which was prepared for one (*i.e.* a single) day was one ox, six choice (therefore fat) sheep, and fowls; they were prepared for me, *i.e.* at my expense, and once in ten days a quantity of wine of all kinds." The meaning of the last clause seems to be, that the wine was furnished every ten days: no certain quantity, however, is mentioned, but it is only designated in general terms as very great, לְהַרְבֵּה. וְעִם זֶה, and with this, *i.e.* notwithstanding this, great expenditure, I did not require the bread of the Pechah (the allowance for the governor, comp. ver. 14), for the service was heavy upon the people. הָעֲבֹדָה is the service of building the walls of Jerusalem. Thus Nehemiah, from compassion for his heavily burdened countrymen, resigned the allowance to which as governor he was entitled.—Ver. 19. "Think upon me, my God, for good, all that I have done for this people." Compare the repetition of this desire, xiii. 14 and 31. עָשָׂה עַל in the sense of עָשָׂה לְ, properly for the sake of this people, *i.e.* for them.

CHAP. VI.—SNARES LAID FOR NEHEMIAH—COMPLETION OF THE WALL.

When Sanballat and the enemies associated with him were unable to obstruct the building of the wall of Jerusalem by open violence (chap. iv.), they endeavoured to ruin Nehemiah by secret snares. They invited him to meet them in the plain of Ono (vers. 1, 2); but Nehemiah, perceiving that they intended mischief, replied to them by messengers, that he could not come to them on account of the building. After receiving for the fourth time this refusal, Sanballat sent his servant to Nehemiah with an open letter, in which he accused him of rebellion against the king of Persia. Nehemiah, however, repelled this accusation as the invention of Sanballat (vers. 3–9). Tobiah and Sanballat, moreover, hired a false prophet to make Nehemiah flee into the temple from fear of the snares prepared for him, that they might

then be able to calumniate him (10–14). The building of the wall was completed in fifty-two days, and the enemies were disheartened (15–17), although at that time many nobles of Judah had entered into epistolary correspondence with Tobiah, to obstruct the proceedings of Nehemiah (18, 19).

Vers. 1–9. *The attempts of Sanballat and his associates to ruin Nehemiah.*—Vers. 1, 2. When Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of the enemies, heard that the wall was built, and that no breaches were left therein, though the doors were then not yet set up in the gates, he sent, etc. נִשְׁמַע לוֹ, it was heard by him, in the indefinite sense of: it came to his ears. The use of the passive is more frequent in later Hebrew; comp. vers. 6, 7, xiii. 27, Esth. i. 20, and elsewhere. On Sanballat and his allies, see remarks on ii. 19. The "rest of our enemies" were, according to iv. 1 (iv. 7, A. V.), Ashdodites, and also other hostile individuals. גַּם עַד הָעֵת וגו׳ introduces a parenthetical sentence limiting the statement already made: Nevertheless, down to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates. The wall-building was quite finished, but doors to the gates were as yet wanting to the complete fortification of the city. The enemies sent to him, saying, Come, let us meet together (for a discussion) in the villages in the valley of Ono.—In ver. 7, נִוָּעֲצָה, let us take counsel together, is synonymous with נוֹעֲדָה of the present verse. The form כְּפִרִים, elsewhere only כְּפָר, 1 Chron. xxvii. 25, or כֹּפֶר, village, 1 Sam. vi. 18, occurs only here. כְּפִירָה, however, being found Ezra ii. 25 and elsewhere as a proper name, the form כְּפִיר seems to have been in use as well as כְּפָר. There is no valid ground for regarding כְּפִרִים as the proper name of a special locality. To make their proposal appear impartial, they leave the appointment of the place in the valley of Ono to Nehemiah. Ono seems, according to 1 Chron. viii. 12, to have been situate in the neighbourhood of Lod (Lydda), and is therefore identified by Van de Velde (*Mem.* p. 337) and Bertheau with Kefr Ana (كفر عانا) or Kefr Anna, one and three-quarter leagues north of Ludd. But no certain information

concerning the position of the place can be obtained from 1 Chron. viii. 12; and Roediger (in the *Hallische Lit. Zeitung*, 1842, No. 71, p. 665) is more correct, in accordance both with the orthography and the sense, in comparing it with Beit Unia (بيت اونيا), north-west of Jerusalem, not far from Beitin (Bethel); comp. Rob. *Pal.* ii. p. 351. The circumstance that the plain of Ono was, according to the present verse, somewhere between Jerusalem and Samaria, which suits Beit Unia, but not Kefr Ana (comp. Arnold in Herzog's *Realenc.* xii. p. 759), is also in favour of the latter view. "But they thought to do me harm." Probably they wanted to make him a prisoner, perhaps even to assassinate him.—Ver. 3. Nehemiah sent messengers to them, saying: "I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down thither. Why should the work cease whilst I leave it and come down to you?" That is, he let them know that he could not undertake the journey, because his presence in Jerusalem was necessary for the uninterrupted prosecution of the work of building.—Ver. 4. They sent to him four times in the same manner (כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה, comp. 2 Sam. xv. 6), and Nehemiah gave them the same answer.—Ver. 5. Then Sanballat sent his servant in this manner, the fifth time, with an open letter, in which was written: "It is reported (נִשְׁמַע, it is heard) among the nations, and Gashmu saith, (that) thou and the Jews intend to rebel; for which cause thou buildest the wall, and thou wilt be their king, according to these words." "The nations" are naturally the nations dwelling in the land, in the neighbourhood of the Jewish community. On the form Gashmu, comp. rem. on ii. 19. הוֹה, the particip., is used of that which any one intends or prepares to do: thou art intending to become their king. עַל־כֵּן, therefore, for no other reason than to rebel, dost thou build the wall.—Ver. 7. It was further said in the letter: "Thou hast also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning thee in Jerusalem, saying, King of Judah; and now it will be reported to the king according to these words (or things). Come, therefore, and let us take counsel together," *sc.* to refute these things as

groundless rumours. By such accusations in an open letter, which might be read by any one, Sanballat thought to oblige Nehemiah to come and clear himself from suspicion by an interview.—Ver. 9. Nehemiah, however, saw through his stratagem, and sent word to him by a messenger: "There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart." בּוֹדֶאם, a contraction of בּוֹדְאָם, from בָּדָא, which occurs again only in 1 Kings xii. 33, to invent, to feign, especially evil things.—Ver. 9. "For," adds Nehemiah when writing of these things, "they all desired to make us afraid, thinking (לֵאמֹר) their hands will cease from the work, that it be not done." The last words, "And now strengthen my hands," are to be explained by the fact that Nehemiah hastily transports himself into the situation and feelings of those days when he prayed to God for strength. To make this request fit into the train of thought, we must supply: I however thought, or said, Strengthen, O God, my hands. חַזֵּק is imperative. The translation, in the first pers. sing. of the imperfect, "I strengthened" (LXX., Vulg., Syr.), is only an attempt to fit into their context words not understood by the translators.

Vers. 10–14. A false prophet, hired by Tobiah and Sanballat, also sought, by prophesying that the enemies of Nehemiah would kill him in the night, to cause him to flee with him into the holy place of the temple, and to protect his life from the machinations of his enemies by closing the temple doors. His purpose was, as Nehemiah subsequently learned, to seduce him into taking an illegal step, and so give occasion for speaking evil of him.—Ver. 10. "And I came into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up." Nothing further is known of this prophet Shemaiah. From what is here related we learn, that he was one of the lying prophets employed by Sanballat and Tobiah to ruin Nehemiah. We are not told what induced or caused Nehemiah to go into the house of Shemaiah; he merely recounts what the latter was hired by his enemies to effect. From the accessory clause, "and he was shut up," we may perhaps infer that Shemaiah in some

way or other, perhaps by announcing that he had something of importance to communicate, persuaded Nehemiah to visit him at his house. וְהוּא עָצוּר does not, however, involve the meaning which Bertheau gives it, viz. that Nehemiah went to Shemaiah's house, because the latter as עָצוּר could not come to him. The phrase says only, that when Nehemiah entered Shemaiah's house, he found him עָצוּר, which simply means shut up, shut in his house, not imprisoned, and still less in a state of ceremonial uncleanness (Ewald), or overpowered by the hand of Jahve—laid hold on by a higher power (Bertheau). It is evident from his proposal to Nehemiah, "Let us go together to the house of God," etc., that he was neither imprisoned in his house, nor prevented by any physical cause from leaving home. Hence it follows that he had shut himself in his house, to intimate to Nehemiah that also he felt his life in danger through the machinations of his enemies, and that he was thus dissimulating in order the more easily to induce him to agree to his proposal, that they should together escape the snares laid for them by fleeing to the temple. In this case, it may be uncertain whether Shemaiah had shut himself up, feigning that the enemies of Judah were seeking his life also, as the prophet of Jahve; or whether by this action he was symbolically announcing what God charged him to make known to Nehemiah. Either view is possible; while the circumstance that Nehemiah in ver. 12 calls his advice to flee into the temple a נְבוּאָה against him, and that it was quite in character with the proceedings of such false prophets to enforce their words by symbolical signs (comp. 1 Kings xxii. 11), favours the former. The going into the house of God is more closely defined by אֶל־תּוֹךְ הַהֵיכָל, within the holy place, where, as is well known, no layman was allowed to enter. "And let us shut the doors of the holy place; for they (the enemies) will come to slay thee, and indeed this night will they come to slay thee." He seeks to corroborate his warning as a special revelation from God, by making it appear that God had not only made known to him the design of the enemies, but also the precise time at which they intended to carry it into execution.—

Ver. 11. Nehemiah, however, was not to be alarmed thereby, but exclaimed: Should such a man as I flee? and what man like me could go into the holy place and live? I will not go in. וְחָי is the perf. with *Vav* consecutive: that he may live. This word is ambiguous; it may mean: to save his life, or: and save his life, not, expiate such a transgression of the law with his life. Probably Nehemiah used it in the latter sense, having in mind the command, Num. xviii. 7, that the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.—Ver. 12. And I perceived,—viz. from the conduct of Shemaiah on my refusal to follow his advice,—and, lo, not God had sent him (*i.e.* had not commissioned or inspired him to speak these words; לֹא emphatically precedes אֱלֹהִים: not God, but himself), but that he pronounced this prophecy against me, because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. The verb שְׂכָרוֹ (sing.) agrees only with the latter word, although in fact it refers to both these individuals.—Ver. 13: "On this account was he hired that I might be afraid, and do so; and if I had sinned (by entering the holy place), it (my sin) would have been to them for an evil report, that they might defame me." The use of לְמַעַן before two sentences, the second of which expresses the purpose of the first, is peculiar: for this purpose, that I might fear, etc., was he hired. To enter and to shut himself within the holy place would have been a grave desecration of the house of God, which would have given occasion to his enemies to cast suspicion upon Nehemiah as a despiser of God's commands, and so to undermine his authority with the people.—In ver. 14 Nehemiah concludes his account of the stratagems of his enemies, with the wish that God would think upon them according to their works. In expressing it, he names, besides Tobiah and Sanballat, the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who, like Shemaiah, would have put him in fear: whence we perceive, 1*st*, that the case related (vers. 10–13) is given as only one of the chief events of the kind (מוֹרְאִים, like vers. 9, 19); and 2*d*, that false prophets were again busy in the congregation, as in the period preceding the captivity, and seeking to seduce the people from

hearkening to the voice of the true prophets of God, who preached repentance and conversion as the conditions of prosperity.

Vers. 15 and 16. *The wall completed, and the impression made by this work upon the enemies of the Jews.*—Ver. 15. The wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, *i.e.* of the sixth month, in fifty-two days. According to this statement, it must have been begun on the third day of the fifth month (Ab). The year is not mentioned, the before-named (ii. 1) twentieth year of Artaxerxes being intended. This agrees with the other chronological statements of this book. For, according to ii. 1, it was in Nisan (the first month) of this year that Nehemiah entreated permission of the king to go to Jerusalem; and we learn from v. 14 and xiii. 6 that he was governor in Jerusalem from the twentieth year onwards, and must therefore have set out for that place immediately after receiving the royal permission. In this case, he might well arrive in Jerusalem before the expiration of the fourth month. He then surveyed the wall, and called a public assembly for the purpose of urging the whole community to enter heartily upon the work of restoration (ii. 11–17). All this might take place in the course of the fourth month, so that the work could be actually taken in hand in the fifth. Nor is there any reasonable ground, as Bertheau has already shown, for doubting the correctness of the statement, that the building was completed in fifty-two days, and (with Ewald) altering the fifty-two days into two years and four months.[1] For we must

[1] Ewald, *Gesch.* iv. p. 178, thinks that traces of the correct reading of this verse are found in the statement of Josephus, *Ant.* xi. 5. 7 sq., that the wall of Jerusalem was finished in two years and four months, and that the word שְׁנָתַיִם may have been omitted from Neh. vi. 15 by an ancient clerical error, though he is obliged to admit that Josephus in other instances gives no trustworthy dates concerning Nehemiah, whom he makes arrive at Jerusalem in the twenty-fifth, and complete the wall in the twenty-eighth year of Xerxes. On the other hand, Bertheau has already remarked, that even if שְׁנָתַיִם is supplied, no agreement with the statement of Josephus is obtained, since the question still remains how four months can be made out of fifty-two days, or

in this case consider, 1*st*, the necessity for hastening the work repeatedly pointed out by Nehemiah; 2*d*, the zeal and relatively very large number of builders—the whole community, both the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the men of Jericho, Tekoa, Gibeon, Mizpah, etc. having combined their efforts; 3*d*, that the kind of exertion demanded by such laborious work and unintermitted watchfulness as are described chap. iv., though it might be continued for fifty-two days, could scarcely endure during a longer period; and lastly, the amount of the work itself, which must not be regarded as the rebuilding of the whole wall, but only as the restoration of those portions that had been destroyed, the repair of the breaches (i. 3, ii. 13, vi. 1), and of the ruined gates,—a large portion of wall and at least one gate having remained uninjured (see p. 180). To this must be added that the material, so far as stone was concerned, was close at hand, stone needing for the most part to be merely brought out of the ruins; besides which, materials of all kind might have been collected and prepared beforehand. It is, moreover, incorrect to compute the extent of this fortified wall by the extent of the wall of modern Jerusalem. —Ver. 16. The news that the wall was finished spread fear among the enemies, viz. among the nations in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem (comp. iv. 1, v. 9); they were much cast down, and perceived "that this work was effected with the help of our God." The expression יִפְּלוּ בְעֵינֵיהֶם occurs only here, and must be explained according to יִפַּל פָּנָיו, his countenance fell (Gen. iv. 5), and נָפַל לֵב, the heart fails (*i.e.* the courage) (1 Sam. xvii. 32): they sank in their own eyes, *i.e.* they felt themselves cast down, discouraged.

Vers. 17–19. To this Nehemiah adds the supplementary remark, that in those days even nobles of Judah were in alliance and active correspondence with Tobiah, because he

vice versa, fifty-two days of four months. In fact, it is vain to seek for any common ground on which these two different statements can be harmonized; and hence the two years and four months of Josephus can scarcely be regarded as furnishing traces of another reading of the text.

had married into a respectable Jewish family.—Ver. 17. "Also in those days the nobles of Judah wrote many letters (מַרְבִּים אִגְּרוֹתֵיהֶם, they made many, multiplied, their letters) passing to Tobiah, and those of Tobiah came to them."—Ver. 18. For many in Judah were sworn unto him, for he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken (to wife) the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. In this case Tobiah was connected with two Jewish families,—a statement which is made to confirm the fact that many in Judah were בַּעֲלֵי שְׁבוּעָה, associates of an oath, joined to him by an oath, not allies in consequence of a treaty sworn to (Bertheau). From this reason being given, we may conclude his affinity by marriage was confirmed by an oath. Shecaniah ben Arah was certainly a respectable Jew of the race of Arah, Ezra ii. 5. Meshullam ben Berechiah appears among those who shared in the work of building, iii. 4 and 30. According to xiii. 4, the high priest Eliashib was also related to Tobiah. From the fact that both Tobiah and his son Jehohanan have genuine Jewish names, Bertheau rightly infers that they were probably descended from Israelites of the northern kingdom of the ten tribes. With this the designation of Tobiah as "the Ammonite" may be harmonized by the supposition that his more recent or remote ancestors were naturalized Ammonites. —Ver. 19. "Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him." טוֹבֹתָיו, the good things in him, or "his good qualities and intentions" (Bertheau). The subject of the sentence is the nobles of Judah. מוֹצִיאִים לוֹ, they were bringing forth to him. On this matter Bertheau remarks, that there is no reason for assuming that the nobles of Judah endeavoured, by misrepresenting and distorting the words of Nehemiah, to widen the breach between him and Tobiah. This is certainly true; but, at the same time, we cannot further infer from these words that they were trying to effect an understanding between the two, and representing to Nehemiah how dangerous and objectionable his undertaking was; but were by this very course playing into the hands of Tobiah. For an understanding between two in-

dividuals, hostile the one to the other, is not to be brought about by reporting to the one what is the other's opinion of him. Finally, Nehemiah mentions also that Tobiah also sent letters to put him in fear (יְרָאֵנִי, infin. Piel, like 2 Chron. xxxii. 18; comp. the participle above, vers. 9 and 14). The letters were probably of similar contents with the letter of Sanballat given in ver. 6.

II.—NEHEMIAH'S FURTHER EXERTIONS IN BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY.—CHAP. VII.-XII. 43.

The building of the wall being now concluded, Nehemiah first made arrangements for securing the city against hostile attacks (vii. 1–3); then took measures to increase the inhabitants of Jerusalem (vii. 4–73 and xi. 1 and 2); and finally endeavoured to fashion domestic and civil life according to the precepts of the law (chap. viii.–x.), and, on the occasion of the solemn dedication of the wall, to set in order the services of the Levites (chap. xii.).

CHAP. VII.—THE WATCHING OF THE CITY. MEASURES TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ITS INHABITANTS. LIST OF THE HOUSES THAT RETURNED FROM BABYLON WITH ZERUBBABEL.

Vers. 1–3. *The watching of the city provided for.*—Ver. 1. When the wall was built, Nehemiah set up the doors in the gates, to complete the fortification of Jerusalem (comp. vi. 1). Then were the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites entrusted with the care (הִפָּקֵד, *præfici*; comp. xii. 14). The care of watching the walls and gates is meant in this connection. According to ancient appointment, it was the duty of the doorkeepers to keep watch over the house of God, and to open and close the gates of the temple courts; comp. 1 Chron. ix. 17–19, xxvi. 12–19. The singers and the Levites appointed to assist the priests, on the contrary,

had, in ordinary times, nothing to do with the service of watching. Under the present extraordinary circumstances, however, Nehemiah committed also to these two organized corporations the task of keeping watch over the walls and gates of the city, and placed them under the command of his brother Hanani, and of Hananiah the ruler of the citadel. This is expressed by the words, ver. 2: I gave Hanani . . . and Hananiah . . . charge over Jerusalem. הַבִּירָה is the fortress or citadel of the city lying to the north of the temple (see rem. on ii. 8), in which was probably located the royal garrison, the commander of which was in the service of the Persian king. The choice of this man for so important a charge is explained by the additional clause: "for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many." The כְּ before אִישׁ is the so-called Caph *veritatis*, which expresses a comparison with the idea of the matter: like a man whom one may truly call faithful. מֵרַבִּים is comparative: more God-fearing than many.—Ver. 3. The Chethiv ויאמר is both here and v. 9 certainly a clerical error for the Keri וָאֹמַר, though in this place, at all events, we might read וַיֹּאמֶר, it was said to them. "The gates of Jerusalem are not to be opened till the sun be hot; and while they (the watch) are yet at their posts, they are to shut the doors and lock them; and ye shall appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some to be at their watch-posts, others before their house." יָנִיפוּ in Hebrew is used only here, though more frequently in the Talmud, of closing the doors. אָחַז, to make fast, *i.e.* to lock, as more frequently in Syriac. The *infin. absol.* הַעֲמֵיד instead of the *temp. fin.* is emphatic: and you are to appoint. The sense is: the gates are to be occupied before daybreak by the Levites (singers and other Levites) appointed to guard them, and not opened till the sun is hot and the watch already at their posts, and to be closed in the evening before the departure of the watch. After the closing of the gates, *i.e.* during the night, the inhabitants of Jerusalem are to keep watch for the purpose of defending the city from any kind of attack, a part occupying the posts, and the other part watching before their (each

before his own) house, so as to be at hand to defend the city.

Vers. 4–73*a*. *The measures taken by Nehemiah for increasing the number of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*—Ver. 4. The city was spacious and great, and the people few therein, and houses were not built. רְחָבַת יָדַיִם, broad on both sides, that is, regarded from the centre towards either the right or left hand. The last clause does not say that there were no houses at all, for the city had been re-inhabited for ninety years; but only that houses had not been built in proportion to the size of the city, that there was still much unoccupied space on which houses might be built.—Ver. 5. And God put into my heart, *i.e.* God inspired me with the resolution; comp. ii. 12. What resolution, is declared by the sentences following, which detail its execution. The resolution to gather together the nobles and rulers of the people for the purpose of making a list of their kinsmen, and thus to obtain a basis for the operations contemplated for increasing the inhabitants of Jerusalem. הַחֹרִים וְהַפַּחוֹת are combined, as in ii. 16. On הִתְיַחֵשׂ, comp. 1 Chron. v. 17.

While this resolve was under consideration, Nehemiah found the register, *i.e.* the genealogical registry, of those who came up at first (from Babylon). בָּרִאשֹׁנָה, at the beginning, *i.e.* with Zerubbabel and Joshua under Cyrus (Ezra ii.), and not subsequently with Ezra (Ezra vii.). "And I found written therein." These words introduce the list now given. This list, vers. 6–73*a*, is identical with that in Ezra ii., and has been already discussed in our remarks on that chapter.

CHAP. VIII.–X.—PUBLIC READING OF THE LAW. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. A PUBLIC FAST HELD, AND A COVENANT MADE TO KEEP THE LAW.

These three chapters form a connected whole, and describe acts of worship and solemnities conducted by Ezra and other priests and Levites, Nehemiah as the secular governor being only twice mentioned in them (viii. 9, x. 2). The contents of

the three chapters are as follows: On the approach of the seventh month, which opened with the feast of trumpets, and during which occurred both the feast of tabernacles and the great day of atonement, the people were gathered to Jerusalem; and Ezra, at the request of the congregation, read to the assembled people out of the book of the law on the first and second days. It being found written in the law, that the Israelites were to dwell in booths during the seventh month, it was resolved to keep the festival in accordance with this direction; and this resolution was carried into execution by erecting booths made with branches of trees on house-tops, in courts, and in the public places of the city, and celebrating the seven-days' festival by a daily public reading of the law (chap. viii.). On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the congregation again assembled, with fasting and mourning, to make a public confession of their sins, and to renew their covenant with God (chap. ix. x.).

The second clause of vii. 73 belongs to chap. viii., and forms one sentence with viii. 1. "When the seventh month came, and the children of Israel were in their cities, the whole people gathered themselves together as one man in the open space that was before the water-gate," etc. The capitular division of the Masoretic text is erroneous, and makes the words, "and the children of Israel were in their cities," appear a mere repetition of the sentence, "and all Israel dwelt in their cities." The chronological statement, "when the seventh month came," without mention of the year, points back to the date in vi. 15: the twenty-fifth Elul, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes; on which day the building of the wall was completed. Elul, the sixth month, is followed by Tishri, the seventh, and there is nothing against the inference that the seventh month of the same year is intended; the dedication of the wall not being related till chap. xii., and therefore occurring subsequently, while all the facts narrated in chap. viii.–xi. might, without any difficulty, occur in the interval between the completion of the wall and its dedication. For, besides the public reading of the law on the first two days of the seventh month, the cele-

bration of the feast of tabernacles, and the public fast on the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month (chap. viii.–xi.), nothing more is recorded (xi. 1, 2) than the execution of the resolve made by Nehemiah, immediately after the completion of the wall (vii. 4), viz. to increase the inhabitants of Jerusalem, by appointing by lot one of every ten dwellers in the surrounding country to go to Jerusalem and dwell there. This is succeeded by lists of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the cities of Benjamin and Judah, and lists of the priests and Levites (xi. 3–xii. 26).

Chap. viii. 1–8. *The public reading of the law.*—Vers. 1–3. The introduction to this narrative (vii. 73*b*–viii. 1*a*) is identical with Ezra iii. 1. The same matter, the assembling of the people on the approach of the seventh month, is described in the same words. But the object of this assembling of the people was a different one from that mentioned in Ezra iii. Then they met to restore the altar of burnt-offering and the sacrificial worship; now, on the contrary, for the due solemnization of the seventh month, the festal month of the year. For this purpose the people came from the cities and villages of Judah to Jerusalem, and assembled "in the open space before the water-gate," *i.e.* to the south-east of the temple space. On the situation of the water-gate, see rem. on iii. 26, xii. 37 sq., and Ezra x. 9. "And they spake unto Ezra the scribe" (see rem. on Ezra vii. 11). The subject of וַיֹּאמְרוּ is the assembled people. These requested, through their rulers, that Ezra should fetch the book of the law of Moses, and publicly read it. This reading, then, was desired by the assembly. The motive for this request is undoubtedly to be found in the desire of the congregation to keep the new moon of the seventh month, as a feast of thanksgiving for the gracious assistance they had received from the Lord during the building of the wall, and through which it had been speedily and successfully completed, in spite of the attempts of their enemies to obstruct the work. This feeling of thankfulness impelled them to the hearing of the word of God for the purpose of making His law their rule of life. The assembly consisted of men and women indiscriminately

(אִישׁ וְעַד אִשָּׁה, like Josh. vi. 21, viii. 25, 1 Sam. xxii. 19, 1 Chron. xvi. 3), and כָּל מֵבִין לִשְׁמֹעַ, every one that understood in hearing, which would certainly include the elder children. The first day of the seventh month was distinguished above the other new moons of the year as the feast of trumpets, and celebrated as a high festival by a solemn assembly and a cessation from labour; comp. Lev. xxiii. 23–25, Num. xxix. 1–6.—Ver. 3. Ezra read out of the law "from the light (*i.e.* from early morning) till mid-day;" therefore for about six hours. Not, however, as is obvious from the more particular description vers. 4–8, without cessation, but in such wise that the reading went on alternately with instructive lectures on the law from the Levites. "And the ears of all the people were directed to the law," *i.e.* the people listened attentively. הַמְּבִינִים must be understood according to כָּל מֵבִין לִשְׁמֹעַ of ver. 2. In vers. 4–8 the proceedings at this reading are more nearly described.—Ver. 4. Ezra stood upon a raised stage of wood which had been made for the purpose (לַדָּבָר, for the matter). מִגְדָּל, usually a tower, here a high scaffold, a pulpit. Beside him stood six persons, probably priests, on his right, and seven on his left hand. In 1 Esdras, seven are mentioned as standing on his left hand also, the name Azariah being inserted between Anaiah and Urijah. It is likely that this name has been omitted from the Hebrew text, since it is improbable that there was one person less on his right than on his left hand. "*Perhaps* Urijah is the father of the Meremoth of iii. 4, 21; Maaseiah, the father of the Azariah of iii. 23; Pedaiah, the individual named iii. 21; the Azariah to be inserted, according to 1 Esdras, the same named iii. 23; a Meshullam occurs, iii. 4, 6; and a Malchiah, iii. 11, 14, 31" (Bertheau).—Ver. 5. Ezra, standing on the raised platform, was above the assembled people (he was מֵעַל כָּל־הָעָם). When he opened the book, it was "in the sight of all the people," so that all could see his action; and "all the people stood up" (עָמְדוּ). It cannot be shown from the O. T. that it had been from the days of Moses a custom with the Israelites to stand at the reading of the law, as the Rabbis assert; comp. Vitringa, *de Synag. vet.* p. 167.—Ver. 6.

Ezra began by blessing the Lord, the great God, perhaps with a sentence of thanksgiving, as David did, 1 Chron. xxix. 10, but scarcely by using a whole psalm, as in 1 Chron. xvi. 8 sq. To this thanksgiving the people answered Amen, Amen (comp. 1 Chron. xvi. 36), lifting up their hands (בְּמֹעַל יְדֵיהֶם, with lifting up of their hands; the form מֹעַל occurring only here), and worshipping the Lord, bowing down towards the ground.—Ver. 7. And Jeshua, Bani, etc., the Levites, expounded the law to the people (הֵבִין, to cause to understand, here to instruct, by expounding the law). The ו copulative before הַלְוִיִּם must certainly have been inserted in the text by a clerical error; for the previously named thirteen (or fourteen) persons are Levites, of whom Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, and Hodijah occur again, ix. 4, 5. The names Jeshua, Sherebiah, Shabtai, and Jozabad are also met with xii. 14, xi. 16, but belong in these latter passages to other individuals who were heads of classes of Levites.—Ver. 8. "And they (the Levites) read in (out of) the book of the law of God, explained and gave the sense; and they (the assembled auditors) were attentive to the reading." The Rabbis understand מְפֹרָשׁ = the Chaldee מְפָרַשׁ, of a rendering of the law into the vulgar tongue, *i.e.* a paraphrase in the Chaldee language for those who were not acquainted with the ancient Hebrew. But this cannot be shown to be the meaning of פרשׁ, this word being used in the Targums for the Hebrew נָקַב (קָבַב), *e.g.* Lev. xxiv. 16, and for בֵּאֵר, Deut. i. 5. It is more correct to suppose a paraphrastic exposition and application of the law (Pfeiffer, *dubia vex.* p. 480), but not "a distinct recitation according to appointed rules" (Gusset. and Bertheau). שׂוֹם is *infin. abs.* instead of the *temp. finit.*: and gave the sense, made the law comprehensible to the hearers. וַיָּבִינוּ בַּמִּקְרָא, not with older interpreters, Luther ("so that what was read was understood"), and de Wette, "and they (the Levites) made what was read comprehensible," which would be a mere tautology, but with the LXX., Vulgate, and others, "and they (the hearers) attended to the reading," or, "obtained an understanding of what was read" (בִּ הֵבִין, like ver. 12, Dan. ix. 23, x. 11). Vitringa (*de syn. vet.* p. 420)

already gives the correct meaning: *de* doctoribus *narratur, quod legerint et dederint intellectum, de* auditoribus, *quod lectum intellexerint.* The manner of proceeding with this reading is not quite clear. According to vers. 5–8, the Levites alone seem to have read to the people out of the book of the law, and to have explained what they read to their auditors; while according to ver. 3, Ezra read to the assembled people, and the ears of all were attentive to the book of the law, while we are told in ver. 5 that Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people. If, however, we regard vers. 4–8 as only a more detailed description of what is related vers. 2, 3, it is obvious that both Ezra and the thirteen Levites mentioned in ver. 7 read out of the law. Hence the occurrence may well have taken place as follows: Ezra first read a section of the law, and the Levites then expounded to the people the portion just read; the only point still doubtful being whether the thirteen (fourteen) Levites expounded in succession, or whether they all did this at the same time to different groups of people.

Vers. 9–12. *The celebration of the feast of the new moon.*— Ver. 9. Then Nehemiah, the Tirshatha (see remarks on Ezra ii. 63), and the priest Ezra the scribe, and the Levites who were teaching the people, said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord our God. Mourn not, nor weep; for all the people wept when they heard the words of the law." הַיּוֹם is the new moon of the seventh month. The portion read made a powerful impression upon the assembled crowds. Undoubtedly it consisted of certain sections of Deuteronomy and other parts of the Thorah, which were adapted to convict the people of their sin in transgressing the commands of the Lord, and of the punishments to which they had thus exposed themselves. They were so moved thereby that they mourned and wept. This induced Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites, who had been applying what was read to the hearts of their hearers, to encourage them.—Ver. 10. And he said to them (viz. Nehemiah as governor and head of the community, though the fact that his address is mentioned does not exclude the participation of Ezra and the Levites):

"Go, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send gifts to them for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; neither be ye sorry, for joy in Jahve is your refuge." מַשְׁמַנִּים, fatnesses (λιπάσματα, LXX.), fat pieces of meat, not "rich cakes" (Bertheau); comp. מְשַׁמַּנִּים, Isa. xxv. 6. מַמְתַּקִּים, sweetened drinks. The sense is: Make glad repasts on good feast-day food and drink; and send portions to the poor who have prepared nothing, that they too may rejoice on this festival. מָנוֹת, gifts, are portions of food; Esth. ix. 19, 22; 1 Sam. i. 4. Hence we see that it was customary with the Israelites to send portions of food and drink, on festivals, to the houses of the poor, that they too might share in the joy of the day. לְאֵין נָכוֹן for לַאֲשֶׁר אֵין נָכוֹן (see rem. on 1 Chron. xv. 12), to them for whom nothing is prepared, who have not the means to prepare a feast-day meal. Because the day is holy to the Lord, they are to desire it with holy joy. חֶדְוַת יהוה is a joy founded on the feeling of communion with the Lord, on the consciousness that we have in the LORD a God long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth (Ex. xxxiv. 6). This joy is to be to them מָעוֹז, a strong citadel or refuge, because the Almighty is their God; comp. Jer. xvi. 19.—Ver. 11. The Levites also strove to pacify the people, saying: "Hold your peace, *i.e.* give over weeping, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved."—Ver. 12. This address had its effect. The people went their way, some to their houses, some to their lodgings, to partake of festal repasts, and to keep the feast with joy; "for they gave heed to the words that were declared to them," *i.e.* they took to heart the address of Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites.

Vers. 13–18. *Celebration of the feast of tabernacles.*—Ver. 13. On the second day were gathered together the heads of the houses of all the people, of the priests, and of the Levites to Ezra the scribe, to attend to the words of the law. The infinitive לְהַשְׂכִּיל may indeed be taken (as by Bertheau) as the continuation of the finite verb, instead of as infinitive absolute (Ewald, § 352, *c*); this is, however, admissible only in cases where the second verb either states what must be done, or further describes the condition of affairs, while

לְהַשְׂכִּיל here states the purpose for which the heads of the people, etc. assembled themselves unto Ezra. Hence we take לְהַשְׂכִּיל in its usual meaning, and the ו before it as explicative. הִשְׂכִּיל אֶל, as in Ps. xli. 1, expresses taking an attentive interest in anything. They desired to be further and more deeply instructed in the law by Ezra.—Vers. 14, 15. And they found written in the law that the Lord had commanded Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month; and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying: "Go forth to the mount, and fetch olive branches, etc. to make booths, as it is written." This statement is not to be understood as saying that the heads of the people sought in the law, fourteen days before the feast, for information as to what they would have to do, that they might prepare for the due celebration of the feast of tabernacles (Bertheau). The text only states that the heads of the people again betook themselves to Ezra on the second day, to receive from him instruction in the law, and that in reading the law they found the precept concerning the celebration of the festival in booths, *i.e.* they met with this precept, and were thereby induced to celebrate the approaching festival in strict accordance with its directions. The law concerning the feast of tabernacles, of which the essentials are here communicated, is found Lev. xxiii. 39–43. In Deut. xvi. 13 they were only commanded to keep the feast with gladness. The particular of dwelling in booths or bowers is taken from Lev. xxiii. 43; the further details in ver. 15 relate to the carrying out of the direction: "Ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook" (Lev. xxiii. 43). Go to the mountain, a woody district, whence branches may be obtained. עֲלֵי, state constructive plural of עָלָה, leaf, foliage, here leafy boughs or branches of trees. זַיִת, the olive, עֵץ שֶׁמֶן, the wild olive (oleaster), the myrtle, the palm, and branches of thick-leaved trees, are here mentioned (the two latter being also named in Leviticus). כַּכָּתוּב does not relate to the preparation of the

booths, but to the precept that the feast should be kept in booths.) In ver. 16 the accomplishment of the matter is related, presupposing a compliance with the proclamation sent out into all the cities in the land, and indeed so speedy a compliance that the booths were finished by the day of the feast. The object (the branches of ver. 15) must be supplied to וַיָּבִיאוּ from the context. They made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the open space at the water-gate (see on ver. 3), and the open space at the gate of Ephraim. On the situation of this gate, see rem. on iii. 8, p. 179. The open space before it must be thought of as within the city walls. On these two public places, booths were probably made by those who had come to Jerusalem, but did not dwell there; while the priests and Levites belonging to other places would build theirs in the courts of the temple.—Ver. 17. And the whole community that had returned from captivity (comp. Ezra vi. 21) made themselves booths and dwelt in booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day, had not the children of Israel done so. כֵּן, so, refers to the dwelling in booths; and the words do not tell us that the Israelites had not celebrated this festival since the days of Joshua, that is, since they had taken possession of Canaan: for, according to Ezra iii. 4, those who returned from captivity kept this feast in the first year of their return; and a celebration is also mentioned after the dedication of Solomon's temple, 2 Chron. vii. 9, 1 Kings viii. 65. The text only states that since the days of Joshua the whole community had not *so* celebrated it, *i.e.* had not dwelt in booths. Neither do the words imply that since the days of Joshua to that time no booths at all had been made at the celebration of the feast of tabernacles, but only that this had not been done by the whole congregation. On former occasions, those who came up to Jerusalem may have regarded this precept as non-essential, and contented themselves by keeping the feast with solemn assemblies, sacrifices, and sacrificial feasts, without making booths and dwelling in them for seven days.—

Ver. 18. And the book of the law was read from day to day. וַיִּקְרָא with the subject indefinite, while Ramb. and others supply Ezra. The reading of the law was only ordered at that celebration of the feast of tabernacles which occurred during the sabbatical year, Deut. xxxi. 10 sq. The last day was the seventh, for the eighth as a עֲצֶרֶת did not belong to the feast of tabernacles; see rem. on Lev. xxiii. 36. כַּמִּשְׁפָּט like 2 Chron. iv. 20, and elsewhere.

Chap. ix. *The day of general fasting and prayer.*—On the twenty-fourth day of the month, *i.e.* two days after the termination of the feast of tabernacles, the children of Israel re-assembled in the temple to humble themselves before God with mourning and fasting, and, after the reading of the law, to confess their own sins and the sins of their fathers (1–3). After the Levites had invited them to praise God (4, 5), a general confession was made, in which the congregation was reminded of all the grace and favour shown by God to His people, from the days of Abraham down to the time then present; and all the departures of the people from their God, all their rebellions against Him, were acknowledged, to show that the bondage and oppression to which Israel was now subjected were the well-deserved punishment of their sins (6–37). This confession of sin much resembles the confession of the faithfulness of God and the unfaithfulness of Israel in the 106th Psalm, both in its plan and details, but differs from this "Hallelujah Psalm" in the circumstance that it does not rise to the praise of God, to the hallelujah, but stops at the confession that God is righteous and true in all that He has done, and that Israel has done wickedly, without definitely uttering a request for pardon and deliverance from oppression.

Vers. 1–3. On the twenty-second of Tishri was the Hazereth of the feast of tabernacles; on the twenty-fourth the congregation re-assembled in the temple, "with fasting and with sackcloths (penitential garments made of hair; see rem. Joel i. 8) and earth upon them," *i.e.* spread upon their heads (1 Sam. iv. 12; 2 Sam. i. 2; Job ii. 12),—the external marks of deep mourning and heaviness of heart.—Ver. 2. "And the seed of Israel separated themselves from

all strangers, and stood and confessed all their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers." This separation from strangers does not specially relate to the dissolution of the marriages contracted with heathen women, nor to any measures taken that only Israelites should be admitted to this assembly (Bertheau). It was rather a voluntary renunciation of connection with the heathen, and of heathen customs.—Ver. 3. And they stood up (*i.e.* remained standing) in their place (comp. viii. 7), and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God, *i.e.* listened to the reading of the law, a fourth part of the day (about three hours), and a fourth part (the next three hours) they confessed (made a confession of their sins), and worshipped the LORD their God. This confession and worship is more nearly described 4–37.—Vers. 4 and 5. There stood upon the scaffold of the Levites, *i.e.* upon the platform erected for the Levites (comp. viii. 4), Jeshua and seven other Levites whose names are given, and they cried with a loud voice to God, and said to the assembled congregation, "Stand up, bless the LORD your God for ever and ever! and blessed be the name of Thy glory, which is exalted above all blessing and praise." The repetition of the names of the Levites in ver. 5 shows that this invitation to praise God is distinct from the crying to God with a loud voice of ver. 4, and seems to say that the Levites first cried to God, *i.e.* addressed to Him their confessions and supplications, and after having done so, called upon the congregation to worship God. Eight names of Levites being given in both verses, and five of these—Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, and Sherebiah—being identical, the difference of the three others in the two verses—Bunni, Bani, and Chenani (ver. 4), and Hashabniah, Hodijah, and Pethahiah (ver. 5)—seems to have arisen from a clerical error,—an appearance favoured also by the circumstance that Bani occurs twice in ver. 4. Of the other names in question, Hodijah occurs x. 14, and Pethahiah Ezra x. 23, as names of Levites, but בְּנֻנִי and חֲשַׁבְנְיָה nowhere else. Hence Bunni, Bani, and Chenani (ver. 4), and Hashabniah (ver. 5), may be assigned to a clerical error; but we have no means for restoring the

correct names. With regard to the matter of these verses, Ramb. remarks on ver. 4: *constitisse opinor omnes simul, ita tamen ut unus tantum eodem tempore fuerit precatus, ceteris ipsi adstantibus atque sua etiam vice Deum orantibus*, hence that the eight Levites prayed to God successively; while Bertheau thinks that these Levites entreated God, in penitential and supplicatory psalms, to have mercy on His sinful but penitent people. In this case we must also regard their address to the congregation in ver. 5 as a liturgical hymn, to which the congregation responded by praising God in chorus. To this view may be objected the circumstance, that no allusion is made in the narrative to the singing of penitential or other songs. Besides, a confession of sins follows in vers. 6–37, which may fitly be called a crying unto God, without its being stated by whom it was uttered. "This section," says Bertheau, "whether we regard its form or contents, cannot have been sung either by the Levites or the congregation. We recognise in it the speech of an individual, and hence accept the view that the statement of the LXX., that after the singing of the Levites, ver. 4, and the praising of God in ver. 5, Ezra came forward and spoke the words following, is correct, and that the words καὶ εἶπεν Ἔσδρας, which it inserts before ver. 6, originally stood in the Hebrew text." But if Psalms, such as Ps. cv., cvi., and cvii., were evidently appointed to be sung to the praise of God by the Levites or by the congregation, there can be no reason why the prayer vers. 6–37 should not be adapted both in form and matter for this purpose. This prayer by no means bears the impress of being the address of an individual, but is throughout the confession of the whole congregation. The prayer speaks of *our* fathers (vers. 9, 16), of what is come upon *us* (ver. 33), addresses Jahve as *our* God, and says *we* have sinned. Of course Ezra might have uttered it in the name of the congregation; but that the addition of the LXX., καὶ εἶπεν Ἔσδρας, is of no critical value, and is a mere conjecture of the translators, is evident from the circumstance that the prayer does not begin with the words אַתָּה הוּא יהוה of ver. 6, but passes into the form of direct ad-

dress to God in the last clause of ver. 5: Blessed be the name of *Thy* glory. By these words the prayer which follows is evidently declared to be the confession of those who are to praise the glory of the Lord; and the addition, "and Ezra said," characterized as an unskilful interpolation. According to what has now been said, the summons, קוּמוּ בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְהוָה, ver. 5, like the introductions to many Hodu and Hallelujah Psalms (*e.g.* Ps. cv. 1, cvi. 1), is to be regarded as only an exhortation to the congregation to praise God, *i.e.* to join in the praises following, and to unite heartily in the confession of sin. This view of the connection of vers. 5 and 6 explains the reason why it is not stated either in ver. 6, or at the close of this prayer in ver. 37, that the assembled congregation blessed God agreeably to the summons thus addressed to them. They did so by silently and heartily praying to, and praising God with the Levites, who were reciting aloud the confession of sin. On וַיְבָרְכוּ R. Sal. already remarks: *nunc incipiunt loqui Levitæ versus Shechinam s. ad ipsum Deum.* The invitation to praise God insensibly passes into the action of praising. If, moreover, vers. 6–37 are related in the manner above stated to ver. 5, then it is not probable that the crying to God with a loud voice (ver. 4) was anything else than the utterance of the prayer subsequently given, vers. 6–37. The repetition of the names in ver. 5 is not enough to confirm this view, but must be explained by the breadth of the representation here given, and is rescued from the charge of mere tautology by the fact that in ver. 4 the office of the individuals in question is not named, which it is by the word הַלְוִיִּם in ver. 5. For הַלְוִיִּם in ver. 4 belongs as genitive to מַעֲלֵה, and both priests and laymen might have stood on the platform of the Levites. For this reason it is subsequently stated in ver. 5, that Jeshua, etc., were Levites; and in doing this the names are again enumerated. In the exhortation, Stand up and bless, etc., Bertheau seeks to separate "for ever and ever" from the imp. בָּרְכוּ, and to take it as a further qualification of אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. This is, however, unnatural and arbitrary; comp. 1 Chron. xvi. 26. Still more arbitrary is it to supply "One day all

people" to וִיבָרְכוּ, "shall bless Thy name," etc. וּמְרוֹמַם וגו adds a second predicate to שֵׁם: and which is exalted above all blessing and praise, *i.e. sublimius est quam ut pro dignitate laudari possit* (R. Sal.).

In ver. 6 this praising of God begins with the acknowledgment that Jahve, the Creator of heaven and earth, chose Abram and made a covenant with him to give the land of Canaan to his seed, and had performed this word (vers. 6–8). These verses form the theme of that blessing the name of His glory, to which the Levites exhorted. This theme is then elucidated by facts from Israel's history, in four strophes. *a.* When God saw the affliction of His people in Egypt, He delivered them by great signs and wonders from the power of Pharaoh, gave them laws and judgments on Sinai, miraculously provided them with food and water in the wilderness, and commanded them to take possession of the promised land (vers. 9–15). *b.* Although their fathers rebelled against Him, even in the wilderness, God did not withdraw His mercy from them, but sustained them forty years, so that they lacked nothing; and subdued kings before them, so that they were able to conquer and possess the land (vers. 16–25). *c.* After they were settled in the land they rebelled again, and God delivered them into the hand of their oppressors; but as often as they cried unto Him, He helped them again, till at length, because of their continued opposition, He gave them into the power of the people of the lands, yet of His great mercy did not wholly cast them off (vers. 26–31). *d.* May He now too look upon the affliction of His people, as the God that keepeth covenant and mercy, although they have deserved by their sins the troubles they are suffering (vers. 32–37).

Vers. 6–8. "Thou art Jahve alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, and all their host, the earth and all that is thereon, the sea and all therein; and Thou givest life to them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth Thee. Ver. 7. Thou art Jahve, the God who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham: Ver. 8. And foundest

his heart faithful before Thee, and madest a covenant with him, to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give to his seed, and hast performed Thy word; for Thou art righteous." Jahve alone is God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all creatures in heaven and on earth. In order duly to exalt the almightiness of God, the notion of heaven is enhanced by the addition "heaven of heavens," as in Deut. x. 14, 1 Kings viii. 27; and that of earth by the addition "the sea and all therein;" comp. Ps. cxlvi. 6. כָּל־צְבָאָם, Gen. ii. 1, here refers only to heaven. מְחַיֶּה, to cause to live = to give and preserve life. כֻּלָּם relates to all creatures in heaven and earth. The host of heaven who worshipped God are the angels, as in Ps. cxlviii. 2, ciii. 21. This only God chose Abram; comp. Gen. xii. 1 with xi. 31 and xv. 7, xvii. 5, where God bestowed upon the patriarch Abram the name of Abraham. The words, "Thou foundest his heart faithful," refer to הָאֱמִין ביהוה there mentioned. The making of a covenant alludes to Gen. xvii. 5 sq.; the enumeration of six Canaanitish nations to Deut. vii. 1, Ex. iii. 8; comp. with Gen. xv. 20 sq. This His word God performed (fulfilled), for He is righteous. God is called צַדִּיק, inasmuch as with Him word and deed correspond with each other; comp. Deut. xxxii. 4.

Vers. 9–15. The fulfilment of this word by the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and their guidance through the wilderness to Canaan.—Ver. 9. "And Thou sawest the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red Sea: Ver. 10. And showedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh and all his servants, and on all the people of his land, because Thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them, and madest Thyself a name, as this day. Ver. 11. And Thou dividedst the sea before them, and they went through the midst of the sea on dry land; and their persecutors Thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters." In ver. 9 are comprised two subjects, which are carried out in vers. 10, 11: (1) the affliction of the Israelites in Egypt, which God saw (comp. Ex. iii. 7), and out of which He

delivered them by the signs and wonders He showed upon Pharaoh (ver. 10); (2) the crying for help at the Red Sea, when the Israelites perceived Pharaoh with his horsemen and chariots in pursuit (Ex. xiv. 10), and the help which God gave them by dividing the sea, etc. (ver. 11). The words in ver. 10*a* are supported by Deut. vi. 22, on the ground of the historical narrative, Ex. vii.–x. The expression כִּי הֵזִידוּ עֲלֵיהֶם is formed according to אֲשֶׁר זָדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם, Ex. xviii. 11. הֵזִיד עַל occurs Ex. xxi. 14 in a general sense. On וְתַעַשׂ לְךָ שֵׁם וגו׳, comp. Jer. xxxii. 20, Isa. lxiii. 12, 14, 1 Chron. xvii. 22. A name as this day—in that the miracles which God then did are still praised, and He continues still to manifest His almighty power. The words of ver. 11 are supported by Ex. xiv. 21, 22, 28, and xv. 19. בִּמְצוֹלוֹת כְּמוֹ אֶבֶן are from Ex. xv. 5; בְּמַיִם עַזִּים from Ex. xv. and Isa. xliii. 16.—Ver. 12. "And Thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar, and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. Ver. 13. And Thou camest down upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments: Ver. 14. And madest known unto them Thy holy Sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses Thy servant. Ver. 15. And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst; and Thou commandedst them to go in and possess the land, which Thou hadst lifted up Thine hand to give them." Three particulars in the miraculous leading of Israel through the wilderness are brought forward: *a.* Their being guided in the way by miraculous tokens of the divine presence, in the pillar of fire and cloud, ver. 12; comp. Ex. xiii. 21, Num. xiv. 14. *b.* The revelation of God on Sinai, and the giving of the law, vers. 13, 14. The descent of God on Sinai and the voice from heaven agree with Ex. xix. 18, 20, and xx. 1 sq., compared with Deut. iv. 36. On the various designations of the law, comp. Ps. xix. 9, cxix. 43, 39, 142. Of the commandments, that concerning the Sabbath is specially mentioned, and spoken of as a benefit

bestowed by God upon the Israelites, as a proclamation of His holy Sabbath, inasmuch as the Israelites were on the Sabbath to share in the rest of God; see rem. on Ex. xx. 9–11. *c.* The provision of manna, and of water from the rock, for their support during their journey through the wilderness on the way to Canaan; Ex. xvi. 4, 10 sq., Ex. xvii. 6, Num. xx. 8; comp. Ps. lxxviii. 24, 15, cv. 40. לָבוֹא לָרֶשֶׁת like Deut. ix. 1, 5, xi. 31, and elsewhere. נָשָׂאתָ אֶת־יָדְךָ is to be understood according to Num. xiv. 30.

Vers. 16–25. Even the fathers to whom God had shown such favour, repeatedly departed from and rebelled against Him; but God of His great mercy did not forsake them, but brought them into possession of the promised land.—Ver. 16. "And they, even our fathers, dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to Thy commandments. Ver. 17. They refused to obey, and were not mindful of Thy wonders that Thou didst amongst them; and hardened their necks, and appointed a captain to return to their bondage. But Thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not." In these verses the conduct of the children of Israel towards God is contrasted with His kindness towards this stiff-necked people, the historical confirmation following in ver. 18. וְהֵם is emphatic, and prefixed to contrast the conduct of the Israelites with the benefits bestowed on them. The contrast is enhanced by the ו explicative before אֲבֹתֵינוּ, *even* our fathers (which J. D. Michaelis would expunge, from a misconception of its meaning, but which Bertheau with good reason defends). Words are accumulated to describe the stiff-necked resistance of the people. הֵזִידוּ as above, ver. 10. "They hardened their necks" refers to Ex. xxxii. 9, xxxiii. 3, xxxiv. 9, and therefore already alludes to the worship of the golden calf at Sinai, mentioned ver. 18; while in ver. 17, the second great rebellion of the people at Kadesh, on the borders of the promised land, Num. xiv., is contemplated. The repetition of the expression, "they hardened their hearts," shows that a second grievous transgression is already spoken of in ver. 17. This is made even clearer by the next clause, וַיִּתְּנוּ רֹאשׁ וגו׳,

which is taken almost verbally from Num. xiv. 4: "They said one to another, Let us make a captain (נִתְּנָה רֹאשׁ), and return to Egypt;" the notion being merely enhanced here by the addition לַעֲבָדָתָם, to their bondage. The comparison with Num. xiv. 4 also shows that בְּמֹרָיִם is a clerical error for בְּמִצְרַיִם, as the LXX. read; for בְּמֹרָיִם, in their stubbornness, after לַעֲבָדָתָם, gives no appropriate sense. In spite, however, of their stiff-neckedness, God of His mercy and goodness did not forsake them. אֱלוֹהַּ סְלִיחוֹת, a God of pardons; comp. Dan. ix. 9, Ps. cxxx. 4. חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם וגו׳ is a reminiscence of Ex. xxxiv. 6. The ו before חֶסֶד came into the text by a clerical error.—Ver. 18. "Yea, they even made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy god that brought thee up out of Egypt, and wrought great provocations. Ver. 19. Yet Thou, in Thy manifold mercies, didst not forsake them in the wilderness; the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day to lead them, and the pillar of fire by night, to show them light in the way wherein they should go. Ver. 20. Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not Thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst: Ver. 21. And forty years didst Thou sustain them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing, their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not." אַף כִּי, also (even this) = yea even. On the worship of the golden calf, see Ex. xxiv. 4. The words "they did (wrought) great provocations" involve a condemnation of the worship of the molten calf; nevertheless God did not withdraw His gracious presence, but continued to lead them by the pillar of cloud and fire. The passage Num. xiv. 14, according to which the pillar of cloud and fire guided the march of the people through the wilderness after the departure from Sinai, *i.e.* after their transgression in the matter of the calf, is here alluded to. עַמּוּד הֶעָנָן is rhetorically enhanced by אֵת: and with respect to the cloudy pillar, it departed not; so, too, in the second clause, אֵת־עַמּוּד הָאֵשׁ; comp. Ewald, § 277, *d.* The words, ver. 20, "Thou gavest Thy good Spirit," etc., refer to the occurrence, Num. xi. 17, 25, where God endowed the seventy elders with the spirit of prophecy for the confirmation

of Moses' authority. The definition "good Spirit" recalls Ps. cxliii. 10. The sending of manna is first mentioned Num. xi. 6–9, comp. Josh. v. 12; the giving of water, Num. xx. 2–8.—In ver. 21, all that the Lord did for Israel is summed up in the assertion of Deut. ii. 7, viii. 4, לֹא חָסְרוּ; see the explanation of these passages.—Vers. 22–25. The Lord also fulfilled His promise of giving the land of Canaan to the Israelites notwithstanding their rebelliousness. Ver. 22. "And Thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them by boundaries; and they took possession of the land of Sihon, both the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan. Ver. 23. And Thou didst multiply their children as the stars of heaven, and bring them into the land which Thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess. Ver. 24. And the children went in and possessed the land, and Thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, both their kings and the people of the land, to do with them according to their pleasure. Ver. 25. And they took fortified cities, and a fat land, and took possession of houses filled with all kinds of goods, wells digged, vineyards and olive gardens, and fruit trees in abundance; and they ate and became fat, and delighted themselves in Thy great goodness." וַתַּחְלְקֵם לְפֵאָה is variously explained. Aben Ezra and others refer the suffix to the Canaanites, whom God scattered *in multos angulos* or *varias mundi partes*. Others refer it to the Israelites. According to this view, Ramb. says: *fecisti eos per omnes terræ Cananææ angulos habitare;* and Gusset.: *distribuisti eis terram usque ad angulum h. l. nulla vel minima regionum particula excepta.* But חלק, Piel, generally means the dividing of things; and when used of persons, as in Gen. xlix. 7, Lam. iv. 16, to divide, to scatter, *sensu malo*, which is here inapplicable to the Israelites. חָלַק signifies to divide, especially by lot, and is used chiefly concerning the partition of the land of Canaan, in Kal, Josh. xiv. 5, xviii. 2, and in Piel, Josh. xiii. 7, xviii. 10, xix. 51. The word פֵּאָה also frequently occurs in Joshua, in the sense of a corner or side lying towards a certain quarter of the

heavens, and of a boundary; comp. Josh. xv. 5, xviii. 12, 14, 15, 20. According to this, Bertheau rightly takes the words to say: Thou didst divide them (the kingdoms and nations, *i.e.* the land of these nations) according to sides or boundaries, *i.e.* according to certain definite limits. Sihon is the king of Heshbon (Deut. i. 4), and the ו before אֶת־אֶרֶץ עוֹג is not to be expunged as a gloss, but regarded as explicative: and, indeed, both the land of the king of Heshbon and the land of Og. The conquest of these two kingdoms is named first, because it preceded the possession of Canaan (Num. xxi. 21–35). The increase of the children of the Israelites is next mentioned, ver. 23; the fathers having fallen in the wilderness, and only their children coming into the land of Canaan. The numbering of the people in the plains of Moab (Num. xxvi.) is here alluded to, when the new generation was found to be twice as numerous as that which marched out of Egypt; while the words לָרֹב כְּכוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם, here and in ver. 15, are similar to Deut. i. 10. The taking possession of Canaan is spoken of in ver. 24. וַתִּכְבַּע recalls Deut. ix. 3. כִּרְצוֹנָם, according to their pleasure, comp. Dan. viii. 4. Fortified cities, as Jericho and Ai.

Vers. 26–31. But even in that good land the fathers were disobedient: they rejected the commands of God, slew the prophets who admonished them, and were not brought back to the obedience of God even by the chastisements inflicted on them, till at length God delivered them into the hands of Gentile kings, though after His great mercy He did not utterly forsake them.—Ver. 26. "And they were disobedient, and rebelled against Thee, and cast Thy law behind their backs, and slew Thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to Thee, and they wrought great provocations. Ver. 27. And Thou deliveredst them into the hand of their oppressors, so that they oppressed them; and in the time of their oppression they cried unto Thee. Then Thou heardest them from heaven, and according to Thy manifold mercies Thou gavest them deliverers, who delivered them out of the hand of their oppressors. Ver. 28. And when they had rest, they again did evil before Thee. Then Thou deliveredst

them into the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them; and they cried again unto Thee, and Thou heardest from heaven, and didst deliver them according to Thy great mercy, many times."—Ver. 26 again contains, like ver. 16, a general condemnation of the conduct of the children of Israel towards the Lord their God during the period between their entrance into Canaan and the captivity, which is then justified by the facts adduced in the verses following. In proof of their disobedience, it is mentioned that they cast the commands of God behind their back (comp. 1 Kings xiv. 19, Ezek. xxiii. 35), and slew the prophets, *e.g.* Zechariah (2 Chron. xxiv. 21), the prophets of the days of Jezebel (1 Kings xviii. 13, xix. 10), and others who rebuked their sins to turn them from them. הֵעִיד בְּ, to testify against sinners, comp. 2 Kings xvii. 13, 15. The last clause of ver. 26 is a kind of refrain, repeated from ver. 18.—Vers. 27 and 28 refer to the times of the judges; comp. Judg. ii. 11–23. מוֹשִׁיעִים are the judges whom God raised up to deliver Israel out of the power of their oppressors; comp. Judg. iii. 9 sq. with ii. 16. רִבּוֹת עִתִּים, multitudes of times, is a co-ordinate accusative: at many times, frequently; רִבּוֹת like Lev. xxv. 51.—Ver. 29, "And testifiedst against them, to bring them back again to Thy law; yet they hearkened not to Thy commandments, and sinned against Thy judgments, which if a man do he shall live in them, and gave a resisting shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear. Ver. 30. And Thou didst bear with them many years, and didst testify against them by Thy Spirit through Thy prophets; but they would not hearken, therefore Thou gavest them into the hand of the people of the lands. Ver. 31. Nevertheless in Thy great mercy Thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for Thou art gracious and merciful."—Vers. 29 and 30 treat of the times of the kings. וַתְּעַד בָּהֶם is the testimony of the prophets against the idolatrous people; comp. ver. 26. וּבְמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ is emphatically prefixed, and taken up again by בָּם. The sentence, which if a man do he shall live in them, is formed upon Lev. xviii. 5, comp. Ezek. xx. 11. On the figurative expression, they gave a resisting shoulder,

comp. Zech. vii. 11. The simile is taken from the ox, who rears against the yoke, and desires not to bear it; comp. Hos. iv. 16. The sentences following are repeated from ver. 16. תְּמִשֵּׁךְ עֲלֵיהֶם is an abbreviated expression for מָשַׁךְ חֶסֶד, Ps. xxxvi. 11, cix. 12, Jer. xxxi. 3, to draw out, to extend for a long time favour to any one: Thou hadst patience with them for many years, viz. the whole period of kingly rule from Solomon to the times of the Assyrians. The delivering into the power of the people of the lands, *i.e.* of the heathen (comp. Ps. cvi. 40 sq.), began with the invasion of the Assyrians (comp. ver. 32), who destroyed the kingdom of the ten tribes, and was inflicted upon Judah also by means of the Chaldeans.—Ver. 31. But in the midst of these judgments also, God, according to His promise, Jer. iv. 27, v. 10, 18, xxx. 11, and elsewhere, did not utterly forsake His people, nor make a full end of them; for He did not suffer them to become extinct in exile, but preserved a remnant, and delivered it from captivity.

Vers. 32–37. May then, God, who keepeth covenant and mercy, now also look upon the affliction of His people, though kings, rulers, priests, and people have fully deserved this punishment; for they are now bondmen, and in great affliction, in the land of their fathers. Ver. 32. "And now, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble that hath come upon us, on our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, and our fathers, and on all Thy people, since the times of the kings of Assyria unto this day, seem little to Thee. Ver. 33. Thou art just in all that is come upon us; for Thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly. Ver. 34. And our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept Thy law, nor hearkened to Thy commandments and Thy testimonies, wherewith Thou didst testify against them. Ver. 35. And they have not served Thee in their kingdom, and in Thy great goodness that Thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which Thou gavest up to them, and have not turned from their wicked works. Ver. 36. Behold, we are now bondmen; and the land that Thou gavest

unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof,[1] behold, we are bondmen in it. Ver. 37. And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom Thou hast set over us because of our sins; and they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress." The invocation of God, ver. 32, like that in i. 5, is similar to Deut. x. 17. אֵל יִמְעַט לְפָנֶיךָ stands independently, the following clause being emphasized by אַתְּ, like *e.g.* ver. 19: Let not what concerns all our trouble be little before Thee; comp. the similar construction with מְעַט in Josh. xx. 17. What seems little is easily disregarded. The prayer is a *litotes;* and the sense is, Let our affliction be regarded by Thee as great and heavy. The nouns לְמַלְכֵינוּ, etc., are in apposition to the suffix of מְצָאַתְנוּ, the object being continued by לְ.—Ver. 33. Thou art just: comp. ver. 8, Deut. xxxii. 4, Ezra ix. 15. עַל כָּל, upon all, *i.e.* concerning all that has befallen us; because their sins deserved punishment, and God is only fulfilling His word upon the sinners. In ver. 34, אַתְּ again serves to emphasize the subject. In the enumeration of the different classes of the people, the prophets are here omitted, because, as God's witnesses, they are not reckoned among these who had transgressed, though involved (ver. 32) in the sufferings that have fallen on the nation.—Ver. 35. הֵם are the fathers who were not brought to repentance by God's goodness. בְּמַלְכוּתָם, in their independent kingdom. טוּבְךָ הָרָב, Thy much good, *i.e.* the fulness of Thy goodness, or "in the midst of Thy great blessing" (Bertheau). The predicate הָרְחָבָה, the wide, extensive country, is derived from Ex. iii. 8. In ver. 36 sq., the prayer that God would not lightly regard the trouble of His people, is supported by a statement of the need and affliction in which they still are. They are bondmen in the land which God gave to their fathers as a free people, bondmen of the Persian monarchs; and the increase of the land which God appointed for His people belongs to the kings who rule over them. The rulers of the land dispose of their bodies and their cattle, by carrying off both men and cattle for their use, *e.g.* for military service. בִּרְצוֹנָם like ver. 24.

Chap. x. *A covenant made* (1–32), *and an engagement entered into, to furnish what was needed for the maintenance of the temple, its services, and ministers* (vers. 33–40).—Vers. 1–28. For the purpose of giving a lasting influence to this day of prayer and fasting, the assembled people, after the confession of sin (given in chap. ix.), entered into a written agreement, by which they bound themselves by an oath to separate from the heathen, and to keep the commandments and ordinances of God;—a document being prepared for this purpose, and sealed by the heads of their different houses.—Ver. 1. And because of all this we make and write a sure covenant; and our princes, Levites, and priests sign the sealed (document). בְּכָל־זֹאת does not mean *post omne hoc*, after all that we have done this day (Schmid, Bertheau, and others); still less, *in omni hoc malo, quod nobis obtigerat* (Rashi, Aben Ezra), but upon all this, *i.e.* upon the foundation of the preceding act of prayer and penitence, we made אֲמָנָה, *i.e.* a settlement, a sure agreement (the word recurs xi. 23); hence כָּרַת is used as with בְּרִית, ix. 8. אֲמָנָה may again be taken as the object of כֹּתְבִים, we write it; וְעַל הֶחָתוּם be understood as "our princes sealed." הֶחָתוּם is the sealed document; comp. Jer. xxii. 11, 14. עַל הֶחָתוּם means literally, Upon the sealed document were our princes, etc.; that is, our princes sealed or signed it. Signing was effected by making an impression with a seal bearing a name; hence originated the idiom אֲשֶׁר עַל הֶחָתוּם, "he who was upon the sealed document," meaning he who had signed the document by sealing it. By this derived signification is the plural עַל חֲתֻמִים (ver. 2), "they who were upon the document," explained: they who had signed or sealed the document.—Ver. 2. At the head of the signatures stood Nehemiah the Tirshatha, as governor of the country, and Zidkijah, a high official, of whom nothing further is known, perhaps (after the analogy of Ezra iv. 9, 17) secretary to the governor. Then follow (in vers. 3–9) twenty-one names, with the addition: these, the priests. Of these twenty-one names, fifteen occur in chap. xii. 2–7 as chiefs of the priests who came up with Joshua and Zerubbabel from Babylon, and in xii.

11–20 as heads of priestly houses. Hence it is obvious that all the twenty-one names are those of heads of priestly classes, who signed the agreement in the names of the houses and families of their respective classes. Seraiah is probably the prince of the house of God dwelling at Jerusalem, mentioned xi. 11, who signed in place of the high priest. For further remarks on the orders of priests and their heads, see xii. 1 sq. — Vers. 10–14. The Levites who sealed were: Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel, and their brethren, fourteen names. Sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel returned, together with seventy-four other Levites, with Zerubbabel and Jeshua; Ezra ii. 4; Neh. vii. 42. Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, and Sherebiah are also named in xii. 8 as heads of orders of Levites. Of the rest nothing further is known, but we may regard them as heads of Levitical houses.—Vers. 15–28. The heads of the people. Forty-four names, thirteen of which are found in the list (Ezra ii.) of the kindreds who returned with Zerubbabel; see Ezra ii. The rest are names either of the heads of the different houses into which these kindreds were divided, or of the elders of the smaller towns of Benjamin and Judah. The fact that, while only thirty-three kindreds and places are enumerated in Ezra ii., forty-four occur here,—although names of kindreds mentioned in Ezra ii., *e.g.* Shephatiah, Arah, Zaccai, etc., are wanting here,—is to be explained partly by the circumstance that these kindreds included several houses whose different heads all subscribed, and partly by fresh accessions during the course of years to the number of houses.

Vers. 29–32. All the members of the community acceded to the agreement thus signed by the princes of the people, and the heads of the priests and Levites, and bound themselves by an oath to walk in the law of the Lord, and to separate themselves from the heathen.—Vers. 29 and 30. And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the doorkeepers, the singers, the Nethinim, and all that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, all who

had knowledge and understanding, held with their brethren, their nobles, and entered into an oath and curse, etc. מַחֲזִיקִים is the predicate of the subjects in ver. 29: they were holding with their brethren, *i.e.* uniting with them in this matter. "The rest of the people, the priests," etc., are the members of the community, exclusive of the princes and heads of the priestly and Levitical orders. The Nethinim, to whom belonged the servants of Solomon (see rem. on Ezra ii. 43 sq.), were probably also represented in the assembly by the heads of the Levites. To these are added all who had separated themselves, etc., *i.e.* the descendants of those Israelites who had been left in the land, and who now joined the new community; see rem. on Ezra vi. 21. The connection of נִבְדָּל with אֶל־תּוֹרַת is significant: separated from the heathen to the law of God, *i.e.* to live according thereto; comp. Ezra vi. 21. Not, however, the men only, but also women and children of riper years, acceded to the covenant. כָּל־יוֹדֵעַ מֵבִין, every one knowing, understanding (מֵבִין and יוֹדֵעַ being connected as an asyndeton, to strengthen the meaning), refers to sons and daughters of an age sufficient to enable them to understand the matter. אַדִּירֵיהֶם, their nobles, is connected in the form of an apposition with אֲחֵיהֶם, instead of the adjective הָאַדִּירִים. The princes and the heads of the community and priesthood are intended. בּוֹא בְאָלָה, to enter into an oath, comp. Ezek. xvii. 13. אָלָה is an oath of self-imprecation, grievous punishments being imprecated in case of transgression; שְׁבוּעָה, a promissory oath to live conformably with the law. We hence perceive the tenor of the agreement entered into and sealed by the princes. *Non subscripsit quidem populus*, remarks Clericus, *sed ratum habuit, quidquid nomine totius populi a proceribus factum erat, juravitque id a se observatum iri.* Besides the general obligation to observe all the commandments, judgments, and statutes of God, two points, then frequently transgressed, are specially mentioned in vers. 31 and 32. In ver. 31: that we would not give our daughters to the people of the lands, etc.; see rem. on Ezra ix. 2. In ver. 32: that if the people of the land brought wares or any victuals on the Sabbath-day,

to sell, we would not buy it of them on the Sabbath, or on a holy day; and would let the seventh year lie, and the loan of every hand. The words עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ וגו׳ are prefixed absolutely, and are afterwards subordinated to the predicate of the sentence by מֵהֶם. מַקָּחוֹת, wares for sale, from לָקַח, to take, in the sense of to buy, occurs only here. נִקַּח מֵהֶם, to take from them, *i.e.* to buy. יוֹם קֹדֶשׁ beside שַׁבָּת means the other holy days, the annual festivals, on which, according to the law, Num. xxviii. and xxix., no work was to be done. To the sanctification of the Sabbath pertained the celebration of the sabbatical year, which is therefore named immediately afterwards. The words נִטֹּשׁ אֶת־הַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁ׳, to let the seventh year lie, *i.e.* in the seventh year to let the land lie untilled and unsown, is an abbreviation taken from the language of the law, Ex. xxiii. 10. מַשָּׂא כָל־יָד also depends upon נִטֹּשׁ. This expression (מַשָּׂא, not מַשָּׁא, being the reading of the best editions) is to be explained from Deut. xv. 2, and means the loan, that which the hand has lent to another; see rem. on Deut. xv. 2.

Vers. 33–40. *Agreement to provide for the expenses of the temple and its ministers.*—If the community seriously intended to walk by the rule of God's law, they must take care that the temple service, as the public worship of the community, should be provided for according to the law and a firm footing and due solemnity thus given to religion. For this purpose, it was indispensable to guarantee the contributions prescribed for the necessary expenses of the temple worship, and the support of its ministers. Hence this entering into a solemn agreement to observe the law was regarded as a suitable occasion for regulating the services prescribed by the law with respect to the temple and its ministers, and mutually binding themselves to their observance.—Ver. 33. We ordained for ourselves (עָלֵינוּ, upon us, inasmuch as such things are spoken of as are taken upon one). לָתֵת עָלֵינוּ, to lay upon ourselves the third part of a shekel yearly for the service of the house of our God. It is not said who were to be bound to furnish this contribution, but it is assumed that it was a

well-known custom. This appointed payment is evidently only a revival of the Mosaic precept, Ex. xxx. 13, that every man of twenty years of age and upwards should give half a shekel as a תְּרוּמָה to the [redacted]-a tribute which was still paid in Christ's days, Matt. xvii. 24. In consideration, however, of the poverty of the greater portion of the community, it was now lowered to a third of a shekel. The view of Aben Ezra, that a third of a shekel was to be paid in addition to the half shekel levied in conformity with the law, is unsupported by the text. הָעֲבוֹדָה, the service of the house of God, is not the building and repairs of the temple, but the regular worship. For, according to ver. 34, the tax was to be applied to defraying the expenses of worship, to supplying the shew-bread, the continual meat and burnt offerings (Num. xxviii. 3–8), the sacrifices for the Sabbaths, new moons (Num. xxviii. 9–15), and festivals (Num. xxviii. 16–29, 38),—for the קָדָשִׁים, holy gifts, by which, from their position between the burnt-offering and the sin-offering, we may understand the thank-offerings, which were offered in the name of the congregation, as *e.g.* the two lambs at Pentecost, Lev. xxiii. 19, and the offerings brought at feasts of dedication, comp. Ex. xxiv. 5, Ezra vi. 17,—for the sin-offerings which were sacrificed at every great festival; and finally for all the work of the house of our God, *i.e.* whatever else was needful for worship (לְ must be supplied from the context before כָּל־מְלֶאכֶת). The establishment of such a tax for the expenses of worship, does not justify the view that the contributions promised by Artaxerxes in his edict, Ezra vii. 20 sq., of things necessary to worship had ceased, and that the congregation had now to defray the expenses from their own resources. For it may readily be supposed, that besides the assistance afforded by the king, the congregation might also esteem it needful to furnish a contribution, to meet the increased requirements of worship, and thus to augment the revenues of the temple,—the royal alms being limited to a certain amount (see Ezra vii. 22).—Ver. 35. "And we cast lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people for the wood-offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after

our houses, at times appointed, year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law." In the law we merely find it prescribed that wood should be constantly burning upon the altar, and that the priest should burn wood on it every morning and burn thereon the burnt-offering (Lev. vi. 12 sq.). The law gave no directions concerning the procuring of the wood; yet the rulers of the people must, at all events, have always provided for the regular delivery of the necessary quantity. Nehemiah now gives orders, as he himself tells us, xiii. 31, which make this matter the business of the congregation, and the several houses have successively to furnish a contribution, in the order decided by casting lots. The words, "at times appointed, year by year," justify the conclusion that the order was settled for several years, and not that all the different houses contributed in each year.[1]—Vers. 36–38. It was also arranged to contribute the first-fruits prescribed in the law. The infinitive לְהָבִיא depends on הֶעֱמַדְנוּ, and is co-ordinate with לָתֵת, ver. 33. The first-fruits of the ground, comp. Ex. xxiii. 19, xxxiv. 26, Deut. xxvi. 2; the first-fruits of all fruit trees, comp. Num. xviii. 13, Lev. xix. 23; the first-born of our sons who were redeemed according to the estimation of the priest, Num. xviii. 16, and of our cattle (*i.e.*

[1] Josephus (*bello Jud.* ii. 17. 6) speaks of a τῶν ξυλοφορίων ἑορτή, which he places on the fourteenth day of the month Λῶος, *i.e.* Ab, the fifth month of the Jewish year. From this Bertheau infers that the plural עִתִּים מְזֻמָּנִים, here and xiii. 31, denotes the one season or day of delivery in each year. But though the name of this festival is derived from the present verse, the LXX. translating עַל קָרְבַּן הָעֵצִים, περὶ κλήρου ξυλοφορίας, it appears even from what Josephus says of this feast, ἐν ᾗ πᾶσιν ἔθος ὕλην τῷ βωμῷ προσφέρειν, that the feast of wood-carrying does not designate that one day of the year on which the wood was delivered for the service of the altar. According to Mishna Taanit, chap. iv. (in Lightfoot's *horæ hebraicæ in Matth.* i. 1), nine days in the year were appointed for the delivery of wood, viz. 1st Nisan, 20th Tammuz, 5th, 7th, and 10th Ab, etc. Further particulars are given in Lundius, *jüd. Heiligtümer*, p. 1067 sq. The feast of wood-carrying may be compared with our harvest festival; and Bertheau's inference is not more conclusive than would be the inference that our harvest festival denotes the one day in the year on which the harvest is gathered in.

in the case of the unclean, the required redemption, Ex. xiii. 12 sq., Num. xviii. 15), and the firstlings of the herds and of the flocks, the fat of which was consumed on the altar, the flesh becoming the share of the priests, Num. xviii. 17. In ver. 38 the construction is altered, the first person of the imperfect taking the place of the infinitive: and we will bring the first-fruits. עֲרִסוֹת, probably groats or ground flour; see rem. on Num. xv. 20, etc. תְּרוּמוֹת, heave-offerings, the offering in this connection, is probably that of wheat and barley, Ezek. xlv. 13, or of the fruits of the field, which are suitably followed by the "fruit of all manner of trees." On "the first of the wine and oil," comp. Num. xviii. 12. These offerings of first-fruits were to be brought into the chambers of the house of God, where they were to be kept in store, and distributed to the priests for their support. "And the tithes of our ground (will we bring) to the Levites; and they, the Levites, receive the tithes in all our country towns. (Ver. 39) And a priest, a son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites take tithes; and the Levites shall bring the tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, into the chambers of the treasury." The parenthetical sentences in these verses, וְהֵם הַלְוִיִּם הַמְעַשְּׂרִים and בַּעֲשֵׂר הַלְוִיִּם, have been variously understood. עָשַׂר in the Piel and Hiphil meaning elsewhere to pay tithe, comp. Deut. xiv. 22, xxvi. 12, Gen. xxviii. 22, many expositors adhere to this meaning in these passages also, and translate ver. 38: for they, the Levites, must give again the tenth (to the priests); and ver. 39: when the Levites give the tenth; while the LXX., Vulgate, Syriac, Rashi, Aben Ezra, Clericus, Bertheau, and others, take עָשַׂר and הֵעֲשִׂיר in these sentences as signifying to collect tithe. We prefer the latter view, as giving a more suitable sense. For the remark that the Levites must give back the tenth (ver. 38) does not present so appropriate a motive for the demand that the tithes should be paid, as that the tithes are due to the Levites. Still less does the addition, in our agricultural towns, suit the sentence: the Levites must give back the tithe to the priests. Again, the fact that it is not said till

ver. 39 that the Levites have to give the tenth of the tenth to the priests, speaks still more against this view. A priest is to be present when the Levites take the tenth, so that the share of the priests may not be lessened. On "the tenth of the tenth," comp. Num. xviii. 26. Hezekiah had provided store-chambers in the temple, in which to deposit the tithes, 1 Chron. xxxi. 11.—Ver. 40 is confirmatory of the preceding clause: the Levites were to bring the tithe of the tithes for the priests into the chambers of the temple; for thither are both the children of Israel and the Levites, to bring all heave-offerings of corn, new wine, and oil: for there are the holy vessels for the service of the altar (comp. Num. iv. 15), and the priests that minister, and the doorkeepers and the singers, for whose maintenance these gifts provide. "And we will not forsake the house of our God," *i.e.* we will take care that the service of God's house shall be provided for; comp. xiii. 11–14.

CHAP. XI.—INCREASE OF THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM. LIST OF THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM, AND OF THE OTHER TOWNS.

Vers. 1 and 2 narrate the carrying out of Nehemiah's resolution, chap. vii. 4, to make Jerusalem more populous, and follow vii. 5 as to matter, but the end of chap. x. as to time. For while Nehemiah, after the completion of the wall, was occupied with the thought of bringing into the thinly populated capital a larger number of inhabitants, and had for this purpose convoked a public assembly, that a list of the whole Israelite population of the towns of Benjamin and Judah might be taken in hand, the seventh month of the year arrived, in which all the people assembled at Jerusalem to perform those acts of worship and solemnities (described viii.–x.) in which this month abounded. Hence it was not till after the termination of these services that Nehemiah was able to carry out the measures he had resolved on. For there can be no doubt that vers. 1 and 2 of the present chapter narrate the execution of these measures. The state-

ment that one in ten of all the people was appointed by lot to dwell in Jerusalem, and the remaining nine in other cities, and that the people blessed the men who showed themselves willing to dwell at Jerusalem, can have no other meaning than, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were increased in this proportion, and that this was consequently the measure which God had, according to vii. 5, put it into Nehemiah's heart to take. The statement taken by itself is indeed very brief, and its connection with vii. 5 not very evident. But the brevity and abruptness do not justify Bertheau's view, that these two verses are not the composition of Nehemiah himself, but only an extract from a larger context, in which this circumstance was fully explained. For Nehemiah's style not unfrequently exhibits a certain abruptness; comp. *e.g.* the commencements of chaps. v. and vi., or the information xiii. 6, which are no less abrupt, and which yet no one has conceived to be mere extracts from some other document. Besides, as the connection between vii. 5 and xi. 1 is interrupted by the relation of the events of the seventh month, so, too, is the account of the building of the wall, iv. 17, vi. 15 sq., and vii. 1, interrupted by the insertion of occurrences which took place during its progress. The first sentence, ver. 1, "And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem," cannot be so closely connected with the next, "and the rest of the people cast lots," etc., as to place the rulers in direct contrast to the rest of the people, but must be understood by its retrospect to vii. 4, which gives the following contrast: The rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem, but few of the people dwelt there; to this is joined the next sentence: and the rest of the people cast lots. The "rest of the people" does not mean the assembled people with the exception of the rulers, but the people with the exception of the few who dwelt at Jerusalem. These cast lots to bring (לְהָבִיא) one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem. The predicate, the holy city, occurs here and ver. 18 for the first time. Jerusalem is so called, on the ground of the prophecies, Joel iii. 17 and Isa. xlviii. 2, because the sanctuary of God, the temple, was there. בְּעָרִים

means, in the other cities of Judah and Benjamin. הַמִּתְנַדְּבִים, those who showed themselves willing to dwell in Jerusalem, is taken by most expositors in contrast to those who were bound to do this in consequence of the decision of the lot; and it is then further supposed that some first went to Jerusalem of their free choice, and that the lot was then cast with respect to the rest. There are not, however, sufficient grounds for this conclusion, nor yet for the assumption that the decision of the lot was regarded as a constraint. The disposal of the lot was accepted as a divine decision, with which all had, whether willingly or unwillingly, to comply. All who willingly acquiesced in this decision might be designated as מִתְנַדְּבִים; and these departed to Jerusalem accompanied by the blessings of the people. Individuals are not so much meant, as chiefly fathers of families, who went with their wives and children.

Vers. 3–36. *The inhabitants of Jerusalem and the other cities.*—Ver. 3. The title reads: "These are the heads of the province who dwelt at Jerusalem; and in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, Israel, the priests, the Levites, the Nethinim, and the sons of Solomon's servants." הַמְּדִינָה is, as in Ezra ii. 1, the land of Judah, as a province of the Persian kingdom. The repetition of יָשְׁבוּ after בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה is not to be understood as contrasting those who dwelt in the cities with the dwellers in Jerusalem in the sense of "but in the cities of Judah dwelt," etc., but is here a mere pleonasm. Even the enumeration of the different classes of inhabitants: Israel, the priests, etc., clearly shows that no such contrast is intended; for Israel, the priests, etc., dwelt not only in Jerusalem, but also, according to ver. 20, in the other cities of Judah. And this is placed beyond all doubt by the contents of the list following; the inhabitants of Jerusalem being enumerated 4–24, and the inhabitants of the other cities of Judah and Benjamin, 25–36. If, however, this title refers to the whole of the following list, it cannot, as Rambach and others thought, contain only an enumeration of those who, in consequence of the lot, had taken up their residence at Jerusalem, but

must be intended as a list of the population of the whole province of Judah in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. It seems strange that the title should announce רָאשֵׁי הַמְּדִינָה, while in the list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem are given, besides the heads, the numbers of their brethren, *i.e.* of the individuals or fathers of families under these heads; and that in the list of the inhabitants of the other cities, only inhabitants of Judah and Benjamin are spoken of. Hence this statement refers *a potiori* to the heads, including the houses and families belonging to them, while in the case of the other cities it is assumed that the inhabitants of each locality were under a head. With ver. 4 begins the enumeration of the heads dwelling in Jerusalem, with their houses; and the first clause contains a special title, which affirms that (certain) of the children of Judah and of the children of Benjamin dwelt at Jerusalem. On the parallel list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem before the captivity, 1 Chron. ix. 2–34, and its relation to the present list, see the remarks on 1 Chron. ix.

Vers. 4*b*–6. Of the children of Judah two heads: Athaiah of the children of Perez (comp. 1 Chron. ii. 4), and Maaseiah of the children of Shela. It has been already remarked on 1 Chron. ix. 5, that הַשִּׁלְנִי is wrongly pointed, and should be read הַשֶּׁלָנִי. בָּל־חֹזֶה is a proper name, as in iii. 15. Athaiah and Maaseiah are not further known. There were in all four hundred and sixty-eight able-bodied men of the sons of Perez, *i.e.* four hundred and sixty-eight fathers of families of the race of Perez, among whom are probably included the fathers of families belonging to Shela, the younger brother of Perez.—Vers. 7–9. Of the Benjamites there were two heads of houses: Sallu, and after him Gabbai-Sallai, with nine hundred and twenty-eight fathers of families. Their chief was Joel the son of Zichri, and Jehuda the son of Sennah over the city as second (prefect).—Vers. 10–14. Of the priests: Jedaiah, Joiarib, and Jachin, three heads of houses, therefore of orders of priests (for בֶּן before Joiarib probably crept into the text by a clerical error; see rem. on 1 Chron. ix. 10); Seraiah, a descendant of Ahitub, as ruler of

the house of God, and their brethren, *i.e.* the eight hundred and twenty-two ministering priests belonging to these three orders. Also Adaiah, of the house or order of Malchiah, and his brethren, two hundred and forty-two fathers of families; and lastly, Amashai, of the order of Immer, with one hundred and twenty-eight brethren, *i.e.* priests. And their chief was Zabdiel ben Haggedolim (LXX. *υἱὸς τῶν μεγάλων*). עֲלֵיהֶם refers to all the before-named priests. רָאשִׁים לְאָבוֹת, heads of fathers, *i.e.* of families, ver. 13, is striking, for the brethren of Adaiah (אֲחֵיהֶם), in number two hundred and forty-two, could not be heads of houses, but only fathers of families. The words seem to have come into the text only by comparing it with 1 Chron. ix. 13. If they were genuine, we should be obliged to understand רָאשִׁים לְאָבוֹת of fathers of families, contrary to general usage.—Vers. 15–18. Of Levites, Shemaiah, a descendant of Bunni, with the members of his house; Shabbethai and Jozabad, "of the heads of the Levites over the outward business of the house of God," *i.e.* two heads of the Levites who had the care of the outward business of the temple, probably charged with the preservation of the building and furniture, and the office of seeing that all things necessary for the temple worship were duly delivered. The names Shabbethai and Jozabad have already occurred, viii. 7, as those of two Levites, and are here also personal names of heads of Levites, as the addition מֵרָאשֵׁי הַלְוִיִּם informs us. As the office of these two is stated, so also is that of those next following in ver. 17; whence it appears that Shemaiah, of whom no such particular is given, was head of the Levites charged with attending on the priests at the sacrificial worship (the מְלֶאכֶת בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים, ver. 22). The three named in ver. 17, Mattaniah an Asaphite, Bakbukiah, and Abda a Jeduthunite, are the chiefs of the three Levitical orders of singers. Mattaniah is called רֹאשׁ הַתְּחִלָּה, head of the beginning, which gives no meaning; and should probably, as in the LXX. and Vulgate, be read רֹאשׁ הַתְּהִלָּה: head of the songs of praise,—he praised for who praised, *i.e.* sounded the *Hodu* for prayer; comp. 1 Chron. xvi. 5, where Asaph is called the chief of the band of

singers. He is followed by Bakbukiah as second, that is, leader of the second band (מִשְׁנֶה מֵאֲחָיו like מִשְׁנֵהוּ, 1 Chron. xvi. 5); and Abda the Jeduthunite, as leader of the third. All the Levites in the holy city, *i.e.* all who dwelt in Jerusalem, amounted to two hundred and eighty-four individuals or fathers of families. The number refers only to the three classes named vers. 15–17. For the gatekeepers are separately numbered in ver. 19 as one hundred and seventy-two, of the families of Akkub and Talmon.

Certain special remarks follow in vers. 20–24.—Ver. 20 states that the rest of the Israelites, priests, and Levites dwelt in all the (other) cities of Judah, each in his inheritance. These cities are enumerated in ver. 25 sq.—Ver. 21. The Nethinim dwelt in Ophel, the southern slope of Mount Moriah; see rem. on iii. 26. Their chiefs were Zihah and Gispa. צִיחָה occurs Ezra ii. 43, followed by חֲשׂוּפָא, as head of a division of Levites; whence Bertheau tries, but unsuccessfully, to identify the latter name with גִּשְׁפָּא. For it does not follow that, because a division of Nethinim was descended from Hasupha, that Gishpa, one of the chiefs of those Nethinim who dwelt on Ophel, must be the same individual as this Hasupha.—Ver. 22. And the overseer (chief) of the Levites at Jerusalem was Uzzi, the son of Bani, of the sons of Asaph, the singers, in the business of the house of God. The מְלָאכָה of the house of God was the duty of the Levites of the house of Shemaiah, ver. 15. Hence the remark in the present verse is supplementary to ver. 15. The chiefs or presidents of the two other divisions of Levites —of those to whom the outward business was entrusted, and of the singers—are named in vers. 16 and 17; while, in the case of those entrusted with the business of the house of God, ver. 15, the chiefs are not named, probably because they were over the singers, the sons of Asaph, who in ver. 15 had not as yet been named. This is therefore done afterwards in ver. 22. לְנֶגֶד מְלֶאכֶת, *coram opere, i.e. circa ea negotia, quæ coram in templo exigenda erant* (Burm. in Ramb.), does not belong to הַמְשֹׁרְרִים, but to פְּקִיד הַלְוִיִּם: Uzzi was overseer of the Levites in respect of their business in the house of God, *i.e.* of those

Levites who had the charge of this business. The reason of this is thus given in ver. 23: "for a command of the king was over them, and an ordinance was over the singers concerning the matter of every day." עֲלֵיהֶם refers to the Levites. "A command of the king was over them" means: the king had commanded them. This command was concerning דְּבַר יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ, the matter of every day. The words stand at the end of the verse, because they refer to the two subjects הַמֶּלֶךְ and אֲמָנָה. אֲמָנָה is an arrangement depending upon mutual agreement, a treaty, an obligation entered into by agreement; comp. x. 1. The meaning of the verse is: The every-day matter was laid upon the Levites by the command of the king, upon the singers by an agreement entered into. דְּבַר יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ, *pensum quotidianum*, is correctly explained by Schmid: *de rebus necessariis in singulos dies.* That we are not to understand thereby the contribution for every day, the rations of food (Ramb., Berth.), but the duty to be done on each day, is obvious from the context, in which not provisions, but the business of the Levites, is spoken of; and Uzzi the Asaphite was placed over the Levites in respect of their business in the house of God, and not in respect of food and drink. The business of the Levites in the house of God was determined by the command of the king; the business of the singers, on the contrary, especially that one of the singers should exercise a supervision over the services of the Levites in worship, was made the matter of an אֲמָנָה, an agreement entered into among themselves by the different divisions of Levites. The king is not David, who once regulated the services of the Levites (1 Chron. xxiii. 4 sq.), but the Persian king Artaxerxes, who is mentioned as הַמֶּלֶךְ *in* ver. 24; and מִצְוַת הַמֶּלֶךְ undoubtedly refers to the full power bestowed by Artaxerxes upon Ezra to order all that concerned the worship of God at Jerusalem; Ezra vii. 12 sq.—Ver. 24. Finally, the official is named who had to transact with the king the affairs of the people, *i.e.* of the whole Jewish community in Judah and Jerusalem. Pethahiah, a Jew of the descendants of Zerah, was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people. לְיַד הַמֶּלֶךְ can scarcely be understood

of a royal commissioner at Jerusalem, but certainly designates an official transacting the affairs of the Jewish community at the hand of the king, at his court.

Vers. 25–36. *The inhabitants of the towns of Judah and Benjamin.*—The heads who, with their houses, inhabited country districts are here no longer enumerated, but only the towns, with their adjacent neighbourhoods, which were inhabited by Jews and Benjamites; and even these are but summarily mentioned.—Vers. 25–30. The districts inhabited by the children of Judah. "And with respect to the towns in their fields, there dwelt of the sons of Judah in Kirjath-arba and its daughters," etc. The use of אֶל as an introductory or emphatic particle is peculiar to this passage, לְ being elsewhere customary in this sense; comp. Ew. § 310, *a*. אֶל denotes a respect to something. חַצֵרִים, properly enclosures, signifies, according to Lev. xxv. 31, villages, towns, boroughs, without walls. שָׂדוֹת, fields, field boundaries.[1] בְּנוֹתֶיהָ, the villages and estates belonging to a town; as frequently in the lists of towns in the book of Joshua. Kirjath-arba is Hebron, Gen. xxiii. 2. Jekabzeel, like Kabzeel, Josh. xv. 21. חַצֵרֶיהָ, its enclosed places, the estates belonging to a town, as in Josh. xv. 45 sq. Jeshua, mentioned only here, and unknown. Moladah and Beth-phelet, Josh. xv. 26, 27. Hazar-shual, *i.e.* Fox-court, probably to be sought for in the ruins of Thaly; see rem. on Josh. xv. 28. Beersheba, now Bir es Seba; see rem. on Gen. xxi. 31. Ziklag, at the ancient Asluj, see Josh. xv. 31. Mekonah, mentioned only here, and unknown. En-rimmon; see rem. on 1 Chron. iv. 32. Zareah, Jarmuth, Zanoah, and Adullam in the plains (see Josh. xv. 33–35), where were also Lachish and Azekah; see on 2 Chron. xi. 9.—In ver. 30*b* the whole region then inhabited by Jews is comprised in the words: "And they dwelt from Beer-sheba (the south-western boundary of Canaan) to the valley of Hinnom, in Jerusalem," through which ran the boundaries of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah (Josh. xv. 8).—Vers. 31–35. The dwellings of the Benjamites. Ver. 31. The children of Benjamin dwelt from Geba to Michmash, Aija, etc. Geba, according to 2 Kings xxiii. 8

and Josh xiv. 10, the northern boundary of the kingdom of Judah, is the half-ruined village of Jibia in the Wady el Jib, three leagues north of Jerusalem, and three-quarters of a league north-east of Ramah (Er Ram); see on Josh. xviii. 24. Michmash (מִכְמָשׁ or מִכְמַס), now Mukhmas, sixty-three minutes north-east of Geba, and three and a half leagues north of Jerusalem; see rem. on 1 Sam. xiii. 2. Aija (עַיָּא or עַיָּת, Isa. x. 28), probably one with הָעַי, Josh. vii. 2, viii. 1 sq., the situation of which is still a matter of dispute, Van de Velde supposing it to be the present Tell el Hadshar, three-quarters of a league south-east of Beitin; while Schegg, on the contrary, places it in the position of the present Tayibeh, six leagues north of Jerusalem (see Delitzsch on Isa. vol. i. p. 277, etc., translation),—a position scarcely according with Isa. x. 28 sq., the road from Tayibeh to Michmash and Geba not leading past Migron (Makhrun), which is not far from Beitin. We therefore abide by the view advocated by Krafft and Strauss, that the ruins of Medinet Chai or Gai, east of Geba, point out the situation of the ancient Ai or Ajja; see rem. on Josh. vii. 2. Bethel is the present Beitin; see on Josh. vii. 2. The position of Nob is not as yet certainly ascertained, important objections existing to its identification with the village el-Isawije, between Anâta and Jerusalem; comp. Valentiner (in the *Zeitschrift d. deutsch. morgld. Gesellsch.* xii. p. 169), who, on grounds worthy of consideration, transposes Nob to the northern heights before Jerusalem, the road from which leads into the valley of Kidron. Ananiah (עֲנָנְיָה), a place named only here, is conjectured by Van de Velde (after R. Schwartz), *Mem.* p. 284, to be the present Beit Hanina (حنينا), east of Nebi Samwil; against which conjecture even the exchange of ע and ח raises objections; comp. Tobler, *Topographie*, ii. p. 414. Hazor of Benjamin, supposed by Robinson (*Palestine*) to be Tell 'Assur, north of Tayibeh, is much more probably found by Tobler, *Topographie*, ii. p. 400, in Khirbet Arsûr, perhaps Assur, عصور, eight minutes eastward of Bir Nebâla (between Rama and

Gibeon); comp. Van de Velde, *Mem.* p. 319. Ramah, now er Râm, two leagues north of Jerusalem; see rem. on Josh. xviii. 25. Githaim, whither the Beerothites fled, 2 Sam. iv. 3, is not yet discovered. Tobler (*dritte Wand.* p. 175) considers it very rash to identify it with the village Katanneh in Wady Mansur. Hadid, *Ἀδιδά*, see rem. on Ezra ii. 33. Zeboim, in a valley of the same name (1 Sam. xiii. 18), is not yet discovered. Neballat, mentioned only here, is preserved in Beith Nebala, about two leagues north-east of Ludd (Lydda); comp. Rob. *Palestine,* and Van de Velde, *Mem.* p. 336. With respect to Lod and Ono, see rem. on 1 Chron. viii. 12; and on the valley of craftsmen, comp. 1 Chron. iv. 14. The omission of Jericho, Gibeon, and Mizpah is the more remarkable, inasmuch as inhabitants of these towns are mentioned as taking part in the building of the wall (iii. 2, 7).— Ver. 36. The enumeration concludes with the remark, "Of the Levites came divisions of Judah to Benjamin," which can only signify that divisions of Levites who, according to former arrangements, belonged to Judah, now came to Benjamin, *i.e.* dwelt among the Benjamites.

CHAP. XII. 1–43.—LISTS OF PRIESTS AND LEVITES. DEDICATION OF THE WALL OF JERUSALEM.

The list of the inhabitants of the province, chap. xi., is followed by lists of the priests and Levites (xii. 1–26). These different lists are, in point of fact, all connected with the genealogical register of the Israelite population of the whole province, taken by Nehemiah (vii. 5) for the purpose of enlarging the population of Jerusalem, though the lists of the orders of priests and Levites in the present chapter were made partly at an earlier, and partly at a subsequent period. It is because of this actual connection that they are inserted in the history of the building of the wall of Jerusalem, which terminates with the narrative of the solemn dedication of the completed wall in vers. 27–43.

Vers. 1–26. *Lists of the orders of priests and Levites.*— Vers. 1–9 contain a list of the heads of the priests and

Levites who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua. The high priests during five generations are next mentioned by name, vers. 10, 11. Then follow the names of the heads of the priestly houses in the days of Joiakim the high priest; and finally, vers. 22–26, the names of the heads of the Levites at the same period, with titles and subscriptions.

Vers. 1–9. Ver. 1*a* contains the title of the *first list*, vers. 1–9. "These are the priests and Levites who went up with Zerubbabel . . . and Joshua;" comp. Ezra ii. 1, 2. Then follow, vers. 1*b*–7, the names of the priests, with the subscription: "These are the heads of the priests and of their brethren, in the days of Joshua." וַאֲחֵיהֶם still depends on רָאשֵׁי. The brethren of the priests are the Levites, as being their fellow-tribesmen and assistants. Two-and-twenty names of such heads are enumerated, and these reappear, with but slight variations attributable to clerical errors, as names of priestly houses in vers. 12–21, where they are given in conjunction with the names of those priests who, in the days of Joiakim, either represented these houses, or occupied as heads the first position in them. The greater number, viz. 15, of these have already been mentioned as among those who, together with Nehemiah, sealed as heads of their respective houses the agreement to observe the law, chap. x. Hence the present chapter appears to be the most appropriate place for comparing with each other the several statements given in the books of Nehemiah and Ezra, concerning the divisions or orders of priests in the period immediately following the return from the captivity, and for discussing the question how the heads and houses of priests enumerated in Neh. x. and xii. stand related on the one hand to the list of the priestly races who returned with Zerubbabel and Joshua, and on the other to the twenty-four orders of priests instituted by David. For the purpose of giving an intelligible answer to this question, we first place in juxtaposition the three lists given in Nehemiah, chaps. x. and xii.

Neh. x. 3-9. Priests who sealed the Covenant.	Neh. xii. 1-7. Priests who were Heads of their Houses.	Neh. xii. 12–21. Priestly Houses, and their respective Heads.	
1. Seraiah.	1. Seraiah.*	Seraiah, . .	Meraiah.
2. Azariah.	2. Jeremiah.*	Jeremiah, . .	Hananiah.
3. Jeremiah.	3. Ezra.*	Ezra, . . .	Meshullam.
4. Pashur.	4. Amariah.*	Amariah, . .	Jehohanan.
5. Amariah.	5. Malluch.*	Meluchi, . .	Jonathan.
6. Malchijah.	6. Hattush.*	———	———
7. Hattush.	7. Shecaniah.*	Shebaniah, . .	Joseph.
8. Shebaniah.	8. Rehum.*	Harim, . . .	Adna.
9. Malluch.	9. Meremoth.*	Meraioth, . .	Helkai.
10. Harim.	10. Iddo.	Idiah, . . .	Zecariah.
11. Meremoth.	11. Ginnethon.*	Ginnethon, . .	Meshullam.
12. Obadiah.	12. Abijah.*	Abijah, . . .	Zichri.
13. Daniel.	13. Miamin.*	Miniamin, . .	———
14. Ginnethon.	14. Maadiah.*	Moadiah, . .	Piltai.
15. Baruch.	15. Bilgah.*	Bilgah, . . .	Shammua.
16. Meshullam.	16. Shemaiah.*	Shemaiah, . .	Jehonathan.
17. Abijah.	17. Joiarib.	Joiarib, . . .	Mathnai.
18. Mijamin.	18. Jedaiah.	Jedaiah, . .	Uzzi.
19. Maaziah.	19. Sallu.	Sallai, . . .	Kallai.
20. Bilgai.	20. Amok.	Amok, . . .	Eber.
21. Shemaiah.	21. Hilkiah.	Hilkiah, . . .	Hashabiah.
	22. Jedaiah.	Jedaiah, . .	Nethaneel.

When, in the first place, we compare the two series in chap. xii., we find the name of the head of the house of Minjamin, and the names both of the house and the head, Hattush, between Meluchi and Shebaniah, omitted. In other respects the two lists agree both in the order and number of the names, with the exception of unimportant variations in the names, as מִלּוּכִי (*Chethiv*, ver. 14) for מַלּוּךְ (ver. 2); שְׁבַנְיָה (ver. 3) for שְׁכַנְיָה (ver. 14, x. 6); רְחֻם (ver. 3), a transposition of חָרִם (ver. 15, x. 6); מְרָיוֹת (ver. 15) instead of מְרֵמוֹת (ver. 3, x. 6); עדיא (*Chethiv*, ver. 16) instead of עִדּוֹא (ver. 4); מִימִין (ver. 5) for מִנְיָמִין (ver. 17); מוֹעַדְיָה (ver. 17) for מַעַדְיָה (ver. 4), or, according to a different pronunciation, מַעַזְיָה (x. 9); סַלַּי (ver. 20) for סַלּוּ (ver. 7).—If we next compare the two lists in chap. xii. with that in chap. x., we find that of the twenty-two names given (chap. xii.), the fifteen marked thus * occur also in chap. x.; עֲזַרְיָה, x. 4, being evidently a

clerical error, or another form of עֶזְרָא, xii. 2, 13. Of the names enumerated in chap. x., Pashur, Malchiah, Obadiah, Daniel, Baruch, and Meshullam are wanting in chap. xii., and are replaced by Iddo and the six last: Joiarib, Jedaiah, Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, and Jedaiah. The name of Eliashib the high priest being also absent, Bertheau seeks to explain this difference by supposing that a portion of the priests refused their signatures because they did not concur in the strict measures of Ezra and Nehemiah. This conjecture would be conceivable, if we found in chap. x. that only thirteen orders or heads of priests had signed instead of twenty-two. Since, however, instead of the seven missing names, six others signed the covenant, this cannot be the reason for the difference between the names in the two documents (chap. x., xii.), which is probably to be found in the time that elapsed between the making of these lists. The date of the list, chap. xii. 1–7, is that of Zerubbabel and Joshua (B.C. 536); that of the other in chap. xii., the times of the high priest Joiakim the son of Joshua, *i.e.*, at the earliest, the latter part of the reign of Darius Hystaspis, perhaps even the reign of Xerxes.

How, then, are the two lists in chap. xii. and that in chap. x., agreeing as they do in names, related to the list of the priests who, according to Ezra ii. 36–39 and Neh. vii. 39–42, returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua? The traditional view, founded on the statements of the Talmud,[1]

[1] In Hieros. Taanith, f. 68*a*; Tosafta Taanith, c. 11, in Babyl. Erachin, f. 12*b*. The last statement is, according to Herzfeld, *Gesch.* i. p. 393, as follows: "Four divisions of priests returned from captivity, viz. Jedaiah, Charim, Paschur, and Immer. These the prophets of the returned captives again divided into twenty-four; whereupon their names were written upon tickets and put in an urn, from which Jedaiah drew five, and each of the other three before-named divisions as many: it was then ordained by those prophets, that even if the division Joiarib (probably the first division before the captivity) should return, Jedaiah should nevertheless retain his position, and Joiarib should be מִפְּנֵי לוֹ (associated with him, belonging to him)." Comp. Bertheau on Neh. p. 230, and Oehler in Herzog's *Realencycl.* xii. p. 185, who, though refusing this tradition the value of independent historical testimony, still give it more weight than it deserves.

is, that the four divisions given in Ezra ii. and Neh. vii., "the sons of Jedaiah, the sons of Immer, the sons of Pashur and Harim," were the priests of the four (Davidic) orders of Jedaiah, Immer, Malchijah, and Harim (the second, sixteenth, fifth, and third orders of 1 Chron. xxiv.). For the sake of restoring, according to the ancient institution, a greater number of priestly orders, the twenty-two orders enumerated in Neh. xii. were formed from these four divisions; and the full number of twenty-four was not immediately completed, only because, according to Ezra ii. 61 and Neh. vii. 63 sq., three families of priests who could not find their registers returned, as well as those before named, and room was therefore left for their insertion in the twenty-four orders: the first of these three families, viz. Habaiah, being probably identical with the eighth class, Abia; the second, Hakkoz, with the seventh class of the same name. See Oehler's before-cited work, p. 184 sq. But this view is decidedly erroneous, and the error lies in the identification of the four races of Ezra ii. 36, on account of the similarity of the names Jedaiah, Immer, and Harim, with those of the second, sixteenth, and third classes of the Davidic division, —thus regarding priestly races as Davidic priestly classes, through mere similarity of name, without reflecting that even the number 4487, given in Ezra ii. 36 sq., is incompatible with this assumption. For if these four races were only four orders of priests, each order must have numbered about 1120 males, and the twenty-four orders of the priesthood before the captivity would have yielded the colossal sum of from 24,000 to 26,000 priests. It is true that we have no statement of the numbers of the priesthood; but if the numbering of the Levites in David's times gave the amount of 38,000 males, the priests of that time could at the most have been 3800, and each of the twenty-four orders would have included in all 150 persons, or at most seventy-five priests of the proper age for officiating. Now, if this number had doubled in the interval of time extending to the close of the captivity, the 4487 who returned with Zerubbabel would have formed more than half of the whole number

of priests then living, and not merely the amount of four classes. Hence we cannot but regard Jedaiah, Immer, Pashur, and Harim, of Ezra ii. 36, as names not of priestly orders, but of great priestly races, and explain the occurrence of three of these names as those of certain of the orders of priests formed by David, by the consideration, that the Davidic orders were named after heads of priestly families of the days of David, and that several of these heads, according to the custom of bestowing upon sons, grandsons, etc., the names of renowned ancestors, bore the names of the founders and heads of the greater races and houses. The classification of the priests in Ezra ii. 36 sq. is genealogical, *i.e.* it follows not the division into orders made by David for the service of the temple, but the genealogical ramification into races and houses. The sons of Jedaiah, Immer, etc., are not the priests belonging to the official orders of Jedaiah, Immer, etc., but the priestly races descended from Jedaiah, etc. The four races (mentioned Ezra ii. 36, etc.), each of which averaged upwards of 1000 men, were, as appears from Neh. xii. 1-7 and 12, divided into twenty-two houses. From this number of houses, it was easy to restore the old division into twenty-four official orders. That it was not, however, considered necessary to make this artificial restoration of the twenty-four classes immediately, is seen from the circumstances that both under Joiakim, *i.e.* a generation after Zerubbabel's return (xii. 12–21), only twenty-two houses are enumerated, and under Nehemiah, *i.e.* after Ezra's return (in Neh. x.), only twenty-one heads of priestly houses sealed the document. Whether, and how the full number of twenty-four was completed, cannot, for want of information, be determined. The statement of Joseph. *Ant.* vii. 14. 7, that David's division into orders continues to this day, affords no sufficient testimony to the fact.

According, then, to what has been said, the difference between the names in the two lists of chap. x. and xii. is to be explained simply by the fact, that the names of those who sealed the covenant, chap. x., are names neither of orders nor houses, but of heads of houses living in the days

of Ezra and Nehemiah. Of these names, a portion coincides indeed with the names of the orders and houses, while the rest are different. The coincidence or sameness of the names does not, however, prove that the individuals belonged to the house whose name they bore. On the contrary, it appears from xii. 13 and 16, that of two Meshullams, one was the head of the house of Ezra, the other of the house of Ginnethon; and hence, in chap. x., Amariah may have belonged to the house of Malluch, Hattush to the house of Shebaniah, Malluch to the house of Meremoth, etc. In this manner, both the variation and coincidence of the names in chap. x. and xii. may be easily explained; the only remaining difficulty being, that in chap. x. only twenty-one, not twenty-two, heads of houses are said to have sealed. This discrepancy seems, indeed, to have arisen from the omission of a name in transcription. For the other possible explanation, viz. that in the interval between Joiakim and Nehemiah, the contemporary of Eliashib, one house had died out, is very far-fetched.

Vers. 8 and 9. *The heads of Levitical houses in the time of Jeshua the high priest.*—Of these names we meet, chap. x. 10 sq., with those of Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, and Sherebiah, as of heads who sealed the covenant; while those of Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son (?) of Kadmiel, are again cited in ver. 24 as heads of Levites, *i.e.* of Levitical divisions. The name יְהוּדָה does not occur in the other lists of Levites in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and is perhaps miswritten for הוֹדִיָה (x. 10, xiii. 7). Mattaniah is probably Mattaniah the Asaphite, the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, head of the first band of singers (xi. 17); for he was עַל הַיְדוּת, over the singing of praise. The form הַיְדוּת, which should probably be read according to the Keri הֵידוּת, is a peculiar formation of an abstract noun; comp. Ewald, § 165, *b.*—Ver. 9. Bakbukiah and Unni (*Chethiv* עַגְבוּ), their brethren, were before them (opposite them) לְמִשְׁמָרוֹת, at the posts of service, *i.e.* forming in service the opposite choir. Ver. 24 forbids us to understand מִשְׁמָרוֹת as watch-posts, though the omission of the doorkeepers (comp. Ezra ii. 42) is remarkable. Bakbu-

kiah recurs ver. 24; the name Unni is not again met with, though there is no occasion, on this account, for the inapt conjecture of Bertheau, that the reading should be וְעָנִי or וַיַּעֲנִי.

Vers. 10 and 11. A note on *the genealogy of the high-priestly line* from Jeshua to Jaddua is inserted, so to speak, as a connecting link between the lists of Levites, to explain the statements concerning the dates of their composition,—dates defined by the name of the respective high priests. The lists given vers. 1–9 were of the time of Jeshua; those from ver. 12 and onwards, of the days of Joiakim and his successors. The name יוֹנָתָן, as is obvious from vers. 22 and 23, is a clerical error for יוֹחָנָן, Johanan, Greek Ἰωάννης, of whom we are told, Joseph. *Ant.* xi. 7. 1, that he murdered his brother Jesus, and thus gave Bagoses, the general of Artaxerxes Mnemon, an opportunity for taking severe measures against the Jews.

Vers. 12–21 contains *the list of the priestly houses and their heads*, which has been already explained in conjunction with that in vers. 1–7.

Vers. 22–26. *The list of the heads of the Levites*, vers. 22 and 24, is, according to ver. 26, that of the days of Joiakim, and of the days of Nehemiah and Ezra. Whence it follows, that it does not apply only to the time of Joiakim; for though Ezra might indeed have come to Jerusalem in the latter days of Joiakim's high-priesthood, yet Nehemiah's arrival found his successor Eliashib already in office, and the statements of vers. 22 and 23 must be understood accordingly.—Ver. 22. "With respect to the Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua were recorded the heads of the houses, and also (those) of the priests during the reign of Darius the Persian." To judge from the הַלְוִיִּם with which it commences, this verse seems to be the title of the list of Levites following, while the rest of its contents rather seems adapted for the subscription of the preceding list of priests (vers. 12–21). עַל מַלְכוּת, under the reign. The use of עַל with reference to time is to be explained by the circumstance that the time, and here therefore the reign of Darius, is re-

garded as the ground and soil of that which is done in it, as *e.g.* *ἐπὶ νυκτί*, upon night = at night-time. Darius is Darius Nothus, the second Persian monarch of that name; see p. 148, where also the meaning of this verse has been already discussed. In ver. 23, the original document in which the list of Levites was originally included, is alluded to as the book of the daily occurrences or events of the time, *i.e.* the public chronicle, a continuation of the former annals of the kingdom. וְעַד יְמֵי, and also to the days of Johanan, the son of Eliashib. So far did the official records of the chronicle extend. That Nehemiah may have been still living in the days of Johanan, *i.e.* in the time of his high-priesthood, has been already shown, p. 150. The statements in vers. 22 and 23 are aphoristic, and of the nature of supplementary and occasional remarks.—Ver. 24. The names Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, frequently occur as those of heads of Levitical orders: the two first in x. 12 sq., Ezra viii. 18 sq.; the two last in ver. 8, x. 10, and Ezra ii. 40; and the comparison of these passages obliges us to regard and expunge as a gloss the בְּנֵי before Kadmiel. Opposite to these four are placed their brethren, whose office it was "to praise (and) to give thanks according to the commandment of David," etc.: comp. 1 Chron. xvi. 4, xxiii. 30, 2 Chron. v. 13; and בְּמִצְוַת דָּ׳, 2 Chron. xxix. 25. מִשְׁמָר לְעֻמַּת מִשְׁמָר, ward opposite ward, elsewhere used of the gatekeepers, 1 Chron. xxvi. 16, is here applied to the position of the companies of singers in divine worship. The names of the brethren, *i.e.* of the Levitical singers, follow, ver. 25, where the first three names must be separated from those which follow, and combined with ver. 24. This is obvious from the consideration, that Mattaniah and Bakbukiah are mentioned in xi. 17 as presidents of two companies of singers, and with them Abda the Jeduthunite, whence we are constrained to suppose that עֹבַדְיָה is only another form for עַבְדָּא of xi. 17. According, then, to what has been said, the division into verses must be changed, and ver. 25 should begin with the name מְשֻׁלָּם. Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub are chiefs of the doorkeepers; the two last

names occur as such both in xi. 19 and Ezra ii. 42, and even so early as 1 Chron. ix. 17, whence we perceive that these were ancient names of races of Levitical doorkeepers. In Ezra ii. 42 and 1 Chron. ix. 17, שַׁלּוּם, answering to מְשֶׁלָּם of the present verse, is also named with them. The combination שֹׁמְרִים שׁוֹעֲרִים מַשְׁמָר is striking: we should at least have expected שׁוֹעֲרִים שֹׁמְרִים מִשְׁמָר, because, while שׁוֹעֲרִים cannot be combined with מִשְׁמָר, שֹׁמְרִים may well be so; hence we must either transpose the words as above, or read according to xi. 19, שֹׁמְרִים בַּשְּׁעָרִים. In the latter case, בַּשְּׁעָרִים is more closely defined by the apposition בַּאֲסַפֵּי הַשְּׁעָרִים: at the doors, viz. at the treasure-chambers of the doors. On אֲסַפִּים, see rem. on 1 Chron. xxvi. 15, 17.—Ver. 26 is the final subscription of the two lists in vers. 12–21 and vers. 24, 25.

Vers. 27–43. *The dedication of the wall of Jerusalem.*—The measures proposed for increasing the numbers of the inhabitants of Jerusalem having now been executed (vii. 5 and xi. 1 sq.), the restored wall of circumvallation was solemnly dedicated. Vers. 27–29 treat of the preparations for this solemnity.—Ver. 27. At the dedication (*i.e.* at the time of, בְּ denoting nearness of time) they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to keep the dedication. Only a portion of the Levites dwelt in Jerusalem (xi. 15–18); the rest dwelt in places in the neighbourhood, as is more expressly stated in vers. 28 and 29. וְשִׂמְחָה, to keep the dedication *and* joy, is not suitable, chiefly on account of the following וּבְתוֹדוֹת, *and* with songs of praise. We must either read בְּשִׂמְחָה, dedication with joy (comp. Ezra vi. 16), or expunge, with the LXX. and Vulgate, the ו before בְּתוֹדוֹת. בְּ must be repeated before מְצִלְתַּיִם from the preceding words. On the subject, comp. 1 Chron. xiii. 8, xv. 16, and elsewhere.—Vers. 28, 29. And the sons of the singers, *i.e.* the members of the three Levitical companies of singers (comp. ver. 25 and xi. 17), gathered themselves together, both out of the Jordan valley round about Jerusalem, and the villages (or fields, חֲצֵרִים, comp. Lev. xxv. 31) of Netophathi, and from Beth-Gilgal, etc. הַכִּכָּר does not mean the district round

Jerusalem, the immediate neighbourhood of the city (Bertheau). For, according to established usage, הַכִּכָּר is used to designate the Jordan valley (see rem. on iii. 22); and סְבִיבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלִַם is here added to limit the כִּכָּר,—the whole extent of the valley of the Jordan from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee not being intended, but only its southern portion in the neighbourhood of Jericho, where it widens considerably westward, and which might be said to be round about Jerusalem. The villages of Netophathi (comp. 1 Chron. ix. 16) are the villages or fields in the vicinity of Netopha, *i.e.* probably the modern village of Beit Nettif, about thirteen miles south-west of Jerusalem: comp. Rob. *Palestine;* Tobler, *dritte Wand.* p. 117, etc.; and V. de Velde, *Mem.* p. 336. Bertheau regards Beth-Gilgal as the present Jiljilia, also called Gilgal, situate somewhat to the west of the road from Jerusalem to Nablous (Sichem), about seventeen miles north of the former town. This view is, however, questionable, Jiljilia being apparently too distant to be reckoned among the סְבִיבוֹת of Jerusalem. "And from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth." With respect to Geba, see rem. on xi. 31. The situation of Azmaveth is unknown; see rem. on Ezra ii. 24 (p. 30). For the singers had built them villages in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and dwelt, therefore, not in the before-named towns, but in villages near them.—Ver. 30. The dedication began with the purification of the people, the gates, and the wall, by the priests and Levites, after they had purified themselves. This was probably done, judging from the analogy of 2 Chron. xxix. 20, by the offering of sin-offerings and burnt-offerings, according to some special ritual unknown to us, as sacrifices of purification and dedication. This was followed by the central-point of the solemnity, a procession of two bands of singers upon the wall (vers. 31–42). —Ver. 31. Nehemiah brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies of those who gave thanks, and two processions. These went each upon the wall in different directions, and stopped opposite each other at the house of God. The princes of Judah are

the princes of the whole community,—Judah being used in the sense of יְהוּדִים, iii. 34. מֵעַל לַחוֹמָה, upwards to the wall, so that they stood upon the wall. הֶעֱמִיד, to place, *i.e.* to cause to take up a position, so that those assembled formed two companies or processions. תּוֹדָה, acknowledgment, praise, thanks, and then thankofferings, accompanied by the singing of psalms and thanksgivings. Hence is derived the meaning: companies of those who gave thanks, in vers. 31, 38, 40. וְתַהֲלֻכֹת, *et processiones*, solemn processions, is added more closely to define תּוֹדָה. The company of those who gave thanks consisted of a number of Levitical singers, behind whom walked the princes of the people, the priests, and Levites. At the head of one procession went Ezra the scribe (ver. 36), with one half of the nobles; at the head of the second, Nehemiah with the other half (38). The one company and procession went to the right upon the wall. Before לַיָּמִין we must supply, "one band went" (הַתּוֹדָה הָאַחַת הוֹלֶכֶת), as is evident partly from the context of the present verse, partly from ver. 38. These words were probably omitted by a clerical error caused by the similarity of תְּהַלֻּכֹת to הוֹלֶכֶת. Thus the first procession went to the right, *i.e.* in a southerly direction, upon the wall towards the dung-gate (see rem. on iii. 14); the second, ver. 38, went over against the first (לְמוּל), *i.e.* in an opposite direction, and therefore northwards, past the tower of the furnaces, etc. The starting-point of both companies and processions is not expressly stated, but may be easily inferred from the points mentioned, and can have been none other than the valley-gate, the present Jaffa gate (see rem. on ii. 13). Before a further description of the route taken by the first company, the individuals composing the procession which followed it are enumerated in vers. 32–36. After them, *i.e.* after the first company of them that gave thanks, went Hoshaiah and half of the princes of Judah. Hoshaiah was probably the chief of the one half of these princes. The seven names in vers. 33 and 34 are undoubtedly the names of the princes, and the ו before עֲזַרְיָה is explicative: even, namely. Bertheau's remark, "After the princes came the orders of priests, Azariah," etc., is in-

correct. It is true that of these seven names, five occur as names of priests, and heads of priestly houses, viz.: Azariah, x. 3; Ezra, xii. 2; Meshullam, x. 8; Shemaiah, x. 9 and xii. 6; and Jeremiah, xii. 2. But even if these individuals were heads of priestly orders, their names do not here stand for their orders. Still less do Judah and Benjamin denote the half of the laity of Judah and Benjamin, as Bertheau supposes, and thence infers that first after the princes came two or three orders of priests, then half of the laity of Judah and Benjamin, and then two more orders of priests. Ver. 38, which is said to give rise to this view, by no means confirms it. It is true that in this verse חֲצִי הָעָם, besides Nehemiah, are stated to have followed the company of those who gave thanks; but that הָעָם in this verse is not used to designate the people as such, but is only a general expression for the individuals following the company of singers, is placed beyond doubt by ver. 40, where הָעָם is replaced by חֲצִי הַסְּגָנִים; while, beside the half of the rulers, with Nehemiah, only priests with trumpets and Levites with stringed instruments (ver. 41) are enumerated as composing the second procession. Since, then, the priests with trumpets and Levites with musical instruments are mentioned in the first procession (vers. 35 and 36), the names enumerated in vers. 33 and 34 can be only those of the one half of the סְגָנִים of the people, *i.e.* the one half of the princes of Judah. The princes of Judah, *i.e.* of the Jewish community, consisted not only of laymen, but included also the princes, *i.e.* heads of priestly and Levitical orders; and hence priestly and Levitical princes might also be among the seven whose names are given in vers. 33 and 34. A strict severance, moreover, between lay and priestly princes cannot be made by the names alone; for these five names, which may designate priestly orders, pertain in other passages to laymen, viz.: Azariah, in iii. 23; Ezra, as of the tribe of Judah, 1 Chron. iv. 17; Meshullam, Neh. iii. 4, x. 21, and elsewhere; Shemaiah, Ezra vi. 13, x. 31, 1 Chron. iii. 22, iv. 37 (of Judah), v. 4 (a Reubenite), and other passages (this name being very usual; comp. Simonis *Onomast.* p. 546); Jeremiah, 1 Chron.

v. 24 (a Manassite), xii. 4 (a Benjamite), xii. 10 (a Gadite). Even the name Judah is met with among the priests (ver. 36), and among the Levites, ver. 8, comp. also xi. 9, and that of Benjamin, iii. 33 and Ezra x. 32. In the present verses, the two names are not those of tribes, but of individuals, *nomina duorum principum* (R. Sal.).—Ver. 35. The princes of the congregation were followed by certain "of the sons of the priests" (seven in number, to judge from ver. 41) with trumpets; also by Jonathan the son of Zechariah, who, as appears from the subsequent וְאָחָיו, was at the head of the Levitical musicians, *i.e.* the section of them that followed this procession. His brethren, *i.e.* the musicians of his section, are enumerated in ver. 36,—eight names being given, among which are a Shemaiah and a Judah. "With the musical instruments of David, the man of God:" comp. 2 Chron. xxix. 26; 1 Chron. xv. 16, xxiii. 5; Ezra iii. 10. "And Ezra the scribe before them," viz. before the individuals enumerated from ver. 32, immediately after. the company of those who gave thanks, and before the princes, like Nehemiah, ver. 38.—Ver. 37. After this insertion of the names of the persons who composed the procession, the description of the route it took is continued. From "upon the wall, toward the dung-gate (31), it passed on" to the fountain-gate; and נֶגְדָּם, before them (*i.e.* going straight forwards; comp. Josh. v. 6, 20, Amos iv. 3), they went up by the stairs of the city of David, the ascent of the wall, up over the house of David, even unto the water-gate eastward. These statements are not quite intelligible to us. The stairs of the city of David are undoubtedly "the stairs that lead down from the city of David" (iii. 15). These lay on the eastern slope of Zion, above the fountain-gate and the Pool of Siloam. הַמַּעֲלֵה לַחוֹמָה might be literally translated "the ascent to the wall," as by Bertheau, who takes the sense as follows: (The procession) went up upon the wall by the ascent formed by these steps at the northern part of the eastern side of Zion. According to this, the procession would have left the wall by the stairs at the eastern declivity of Zion, to go up upon the wall again by this ascent. There is, however, no reason for

this leaving of the wall, and that which Bertheau adduces is connected with his erroneous transposition of the fountain-gate to the place of the present dung-gate. הַמַּעֲלֶה לַחוֹמָה seems to be the part of the wall which, according to iii. 19, lay opposite the עֲלֵת הַנֶּשֶׁק הַמִּקְצוֹעַ, a place on the eastern edge of Zion, where the wall was carried over an elevation of the ground, and where consequently was an ascent in the wall. Certainly this cannot be insisted upon, because the further statement מֵעַל לְבֵית דָּוִיד is obscure, the preposition מֵעַל לְ admitting of various interpretations, and the situation of the house of David being uncertain. Bertheau, indeed, says: "וְעַד in the following words corresponds with מֵעַל before לְבֵית דָּוִיד: a wall over the house of David is not intended; and the meaning is rather, that after they were come as far as the wall, they then passed over the house of David, *i.e.* the place called the house of David, even to the water-gate." But the separation of מֵעַל from לְבֵית דָּוִיד is decidedly incorrect, מֵעַל לְ being in the preceding and following passages always used in combination, and forming one idea; comp. ver. 31 (twice) and vers. 38 and 39. Hence it could scarcely be taken here in ver. 37 in a different sense from that which it has in 31 and 38. Not less objectionable is the notion that the house of David is here put for a place called the house of David, on which a palace of David formerly stood, and where perhaps the remains of an ancient royal building might still have been in existence. By the house of David is meant, either the royal palace built (according to Thenius) by Solomon at the north-eastern corner of Zion, opposite the temple, or some other building of David, situate south of this palace, on the east side of Zion. The former view is more probable than the latter. We translate מֵעַל לְבֵית ד', past the house of David. For, though מֵעַל לַחוֹמָה must undoubtedly be so understood as to express that the procession went upon the wall (which must be conceived of as tolerably broad), yet מֵעַל לְמִגְדָּל, ver. 38, can scarcely mean that the procession also went up over the tower which stood near the wall. In the case of the gates, too, מֵעַל לְ cannot mean over upon; for it is inconceivable that this solemn procession should have gone

over the roof of the gates; and we conclude, on the contrary, that it passed beside the gates and towers. Whether the route taken by the procession from the house of David to the water-gate in the east were straight over the ridge of Ophel, which ran from about the horse-gate to the water-gate, or upon the wall round Ophel, cannot be determined, the description being incomplete. After the house of David, no further information as to its course is given; its halting-place, the water-gate, being alone mentioned.

The route taken by the second company is more particularly described.—Vers. 38 and 39. "And the second company of them that gave thanks, which went over against, and which I and the (other) half of the people followed, (went) upon the wall past the tower of the furnaces, as far as the broad wall; and past the gate of Ephraim, and past the gate of the old (wall), and past the fish-gate, and past the tower Hananeel and the tower Hammeah, even to the sheep-gate: and then took up its station at the prison-gate." לְמוּאל (in this form with א only here; elsewhere מוּל, Deut. i. 1, or מוּל), over against, opposite, *sc.* the first procession, therefore towards the opposite side, *i.e.* to the left; the first having gone to the right, viz. from the valley-gate northwards upon the northern wall. וַאֲנִי אַחֲרֵיהָ וגו׳ (and I behind them) is a circumstantial clause, which we may take relatively. The order of the towers, the lengths of wall, and the gates, exactly answer to the description in chap. iii. 1–12, with these differences:—*a.* The description proceeds from the sheep-gate in the east to the valley-gate in the west; while the procession moved in the opposite direction, viz. from the valley-gate to the sheep-gate. *b.* In the description of the building of the wall, chap. iii., the gate of Ephraim is omitted (see rem. on iii. 8, p. 170). *c.* In the description, the prison-gate at which the procession halted is also unmentioned, undoubtedly for the same reason as that the gate of Ephraim is omitted, viz. that not having been destroyed, there was no need to rebuild it. שַׁעַר הַמַּטָּרָה is translated, gate of the prison or watch: its position is disputed; but it can scarcely be doubted that הַמַּטָּרָה is the court of the prison mentioned

iii. 25 (חֲצַר הַמַּטָּרָה), by or near the king's house. Starting from the assumption that the two companies halted or took up positions opposite each other, Hupfeld (in his before-cited work, p. 321) transposes both the court of the prison and the king's house to the north of the temple area, where the citadel, בִּירָה, *βâρις*, was subsequently situated. But "this being forbidden," as Arnold objects (in his before-cited work, p. 628), "by the order in the description of the building of the wall, iii. 25, which brings us absolutely to the southern side," Bertheau supposes that the two processions which would arrive at the same moment at the temple,—the one from the north-east, the other from the south-east,—here passed each other, and afterwards halted opposite each other in such wise, that the procession advancing from the south-west stood on the northern side, and that from the north-west at the southern side of the temple area. This notion, however, having not the slightest support from the text, nor any reason appearing why the one procession should pass the other, it must be regarded as a mere expedient. In ver. 40 it is merely said, the two companies stood in the house of God; and not even that they stood opposite each other, the one on the north, the other on the south side of the temple. Thus they may have stood side by side, and together have praised the Lord. Hence we place the prison-gate also on the south-eastern corner of the temple area, and explain the name from the circumstance that a street ran from this gate over Ophel to the court of the prison near the king's house upon Zion, which, together with the gate to which it led, received its name from the court of the prison. Not far from the prison-gate lay the water-gate in the east, near which was an open space in the direction of the temple area (viii. 1). On this open space the two companies met, and took the direction towards the temple, entering the temple area from this open space, that they might offer their thank-offerings before the altar of burnt-offering (ver. 43). Besides, the remark upon the position of the two companies (ver. 40) anticipates the course of events, the procession following the second company being first described in vers. 40*b*–42. At the

end of ver. 40 the statement of ver. 38—I and the half of the people behind—is again taken up in the words: I and the half of the rulers with me. The סְגָנִים are, as in ver. 32, the princes of the congregation, who, with Nehemiah, headed the procession that followed the company of those who gave thanks. Then followed (ver. 41) seven priests with trumpets, whose names are given, answering to the sons of the priests with trumpets (ver. 36*a*) in the first procession. These names are all met with elsewhere of other persons. These were succeeded, as in ver. 36, by eight Levites—eight individuals, and not eight divisions (Bertheau). And the singers gave forth sound, *i.e.* of voices and instruments,—whether during the circuit or after the two companies had taken their places at the temple, is doubtful. The president of the Levitical singers was Jezrahiah.—Ver. 43. The solemnity terminated with the offering of great sacrifices and a general festival of rejoicing. In the matter of sacrificing, the person of Nehemiah would necessarily recede; hence he relates the close of the proceedings objectively, and speaks in the third person, as he had done when speaking of the preparations for them, ver. 27, etc., only using the first (vers. 31, 38, 40) person when speaking of what was appointed by himself, or of his own position. The זְבָחִים were chiefly thankofferings which, terminating in feasting upon the sacrifices,—and these feasts in which the women and children participated,—contributed to the enhancement of the general joy, the joy which God had given them by the success He had accorded to their work of building their wall. For a description of their rejoicing, comp. 2 Chron. xx. 27, Ezra vi. 22, and iii. 13.

III.—NEHEMIAH'S OPERATIONS DURING HIS SECOND SOJOURN IN JERUSALEM.—Chap. xii. 44-xiii. 31.

The joint efforts of Nehemiah and Ezra succeeded both in restoring the enactments of the law for the performance and

maintenance of the public worship, and in carrying out the separation of the community from strangers, especially by the dissolution of unlawful marriages (xii. 44–xiii. 3). When Nehemiah, however, returned to the king at Babylon, in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, and remained there some time, the abuses which had been abolished were again allowed by the people. During Nehemiah's absence, Eliashib the priest prepared a chamber in the fore-court of the temple, as a dwelling for his son-in-law Tobiah the Ammonite. The delivery of their dues to the Levites (the first-fruits and tenths) was omitted, and the Sabbath desecrated by field-work and by buying and selling in Jerusalem; Jews married Ashdodite, Ammonitish, and Moabitish wives; even a son of the high priest Joiada allying himself by marriage with Sanballat the Horonite. All these illegal acts were energetically opposed by Nehemiah at his return to Jerusalem, when he strove both to purify the congregation from foreigners, and to restore the appointments of the law with respect to divine worship (xiii. 4–31).

The narration of these events and of the proceedings of Nehemiah in the last section of this book, is introduced by a brief summary (in chap. xii. 44–xiii. 3) of what was done for the ordering of divine worship, and for the separation of Israel from strangers; and this introduction is so annexed to what precedes, not only by the formula בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא (xii. 44 and xiii. 1), but also by its contents, that it might be regarded as a summary of what Nehemiah had effected during his first stay at Jerusalem. It is not till the connective וְלִפְנֵי מִזֶּה, "and before this" (xiii. 4), with which the recital of what occurred during Nehemiah's absence from Jerusalem, in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, begins, that we perceive that this description of the restored legal appointments relates not only to the time before the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, but applies also to that of Nehemiah's second stay at Jerusalem, and bears only the appearance of an introduction, being in fact a brief summary of all that Nehemiah effected both before and after the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes. This is a form of statement

which, as already remarked, p. 152, is to be explained by the circumstance that Nehemiah did not compile this narrative of his operations till the evening of his days.

Chap. xii. 44–xiii. 3. *The reformations in worship and in social life effected by Nehemiah.*—Vers. 44–47. *Appointments concerning divine worship.* Ver. 44. And at that time were certain appointed over the chambers of store-places for the heave-offerings, the first-fruits, and the tenths, to gather into them, according to the fields of the cities, the portions appointed by the law for the priests and Levites. Though the definition of time בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא corresponds with the בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא of ver. 43, it is nevertheless used in a more general sense, and does not refer, as in ver. 43, to the day of the dedication of the wall, but only declares that what follows belongs chiefly to the time hitherto spoken of. יוֹם means, not merely a day of twelve or twenty-four hours, but very frequently stands for the time generally speaking at which anything occurs, or *certum quoddam temporis spatium;* and it is only from the context that we can perceive whether יוֹם is used in its narrower or more extended meaning. Hence בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא is often used in the historical and prophetical books, *de die,* or *de tempore modo memorato,* in contradistinction to הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, the time present to the narrator; comp. 1 Sam. xxvii. 6, xxx. 25, and the discussion in Gesen. *Thes.* p. 369. That the expression refers in the present verse not to any particular day, but to the time in question generally, is obvious from the whole statement, vers. 44–47. נְשָׂכוֹת לָאוֹצָרוֹת are not chambers for the treasures, *i.e.* treasure-chambers; but both here and xiii. 12, אוֹצָרוֹת signify places where stores are kept, magazines; hence: these are chambers for store-places for the heave-offerings, etc.; comp. x. 38–40. With respect to נְשָׂכוֹת, see rem. on iii. 30. לִשְׂדֵי הֶעָרִים, according to the fields of the cities, according to the delivery of the tenth of the crop from the fields of the different cities. These contributions necessitated the appointment of individuals to have the care of the store-chambers; "for Judah rejoiced in the priests and the Levites who were ministering," and therefore contributed willingly and abundantly "the portions of the law,"

i.e. the portions prescribed in the law. The form מְנָאוֹת is exchanged for מְנָיוֹת, ver. 47 and xiii. 10. הָעֹמְדִים is a shorter expression for הָעֹמְדִים לִפְנֵי יהוה, Deut. x. 8: standing before the Lord, *i.e.* ministering.—Ver. 45. And they cared for the care of their God, etc.; *i.e.* they observed all that was to be observed, both with respect to God and with respect to purification, *i.e.* they faithfully and punctually performed their office. On שָׁמַר מִשְׁמֶרֶת, see rem. on Gen. xxvi. 5 and Lev. viii. 35. "And (so also) the singers and doorkeepers," *i.e.* they, too, observed the duties incumbent on them. This must be mentally supplied from the beginning of the verse. "According to the commandment of David and of Solomon his son;" comp. 2 Chron. viii. 14 and 1 Chron. xxiv. 26. ו must be inserted before שְׁלֹמֹה, as in the LXX. and Vulgate, after the analogy of 2 Chron. xxxiii. 7 and xxxv. 4; for an asyndeton would be here too harsh. As ו is here omitted, so does it also appear superfluously before אָסָף, ver. 46, probably by a clerical error. The verse can be only understood as saying: "for in the days of David, Asaph was of old chief of the singers, and of the songs of praise, and of the thanksgiving unto God." ו before Asaph is here out of place; for to take it as introducing a conclusion: in the days of David, therefore, was Asaph . . . seems unnatural. The ו probably came into the text through a reminiscence of 2 Chron. xxix. 30 and xxxv. 15. The matter, however, of these passages is consistent with the naming of David *and* Asaph, while such a co-ordination is unsuitable in the present passage. The Masoretes have indeed attempted to make sense of the words by altering the singular רֹאשׁ into the plural רָאשֵׁי; but the Keri רָאשֵׁי is nothing more than a worthless conjecture, arising partly from the unsuitableness of ו before אָסָף, and partly from the consideration that Henan and Ethan were, as well as Asaph, chiefs of bands of singers. Nehemiah, however, was not concerned in this passage about exactness of statement,—the mention of Asaph as chief of the singers being quite sufficient for the purpose of his remark, that from the times of David onward orders of singers had existed.—In ver. 47 this subject is concluded by the general

statement that all Israel, *i.e.* the whole community, in the days of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, gave the portions prescribed in the law for the ministers of the sanctuary, singers, doorkeepers, Levites, and priests. מַקְדִּישִׁים, they were sanctifying, *i.e. consecrabant.* הִקְדִּישׁ, to sanctify, said of the bringing of gifts and dues to the ministers of the sanctuary; comp. 1 Chron. xxvi. 27, Lev. xxvii. 14. On the matter itself, comp. x. 38 sq. and Num. xviii. 26–29.

Chap. xiii. 1–3. *Public reading of the law, and separation from strangers.*—Ver. 1. At a public reading of the law, it was found written therein, that no Ammonite or Moabite should come into the congregation of God, because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam to curse them, though God turned the curse into a blessing. This command, found in Deut. xxiii. 4–6, is given in full as to matter, though slightly abbreviated as to form. The sing. יִשְׂכֹּר relates to Balak king of Moab, Num. xxii. 2 sq., and the suffix of עָלָיו to Israel as a nation; see the explanation of Deut. xxiii. 4 sq.—Ver. 3. This law being understood, all strangers were separated from Israel. עֵרֶב is taken from Ex. xii. 38, where it denotes the mixed multitude of non-Israelitish people who followed the Israelites at their departure from Egypt. The word is here transferred to strangers of different heathen nationalities living among the Israelites. The date of the occurrence here related cannot be more precisely defined from the בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. Public readings of the law frequently took place in those days, as is obvious from chap. viii. and ix., where we learn that in the seventh month the book of the law was publicly read, not only on the first and second days, but also daily during the feast of tabernacles, and again on the day of prayer and fasting on the twenty-fourth of the month. It appears, however, from לִפְנֵי מִזֶּה, ver. 4, compared with ver. 6, that the reading vers. 1–3 took place in the interval between Nehemiah's first and second stay at Jerusalem. This view is not opposed by the facts mentioned vers. 4 sq. and 23 sq. The separation of the עֵרֶב could not be carried out at once; and hence, notwithstanding repeated resolutions to sever them-

selves from strangers (ix. 2, x. 31), cases to the contrary might be discovered, and make fresh separations needful.

Vers. 4–31. *Nehemiah, on his return to Jerusalem, reforms the irregularities that had broken out during his absence.*— Vers. 4–9. While Nehemiah was at Babylon with King Artaxerxes, Eliashib the high priest had given up to his relative, Tobiah the Ammonite (ii. 10, iii. 35, and elsewhere), a large chamber in the temple, *i.e.* in the fore-court of the temple (ver. 7), probably for his use as a dwelling when he visited Jerusalem (see rem. on ver. 8). On his return, Nehemiah immediately cast all the furniture of Tobiah out of this chamber, purified the chambers, and restored them to their proper use as a magazine for the temple stores. לִפְנֵי מִזֶּה, before this (comp. Ewald, § 315, *c*), refers to the beforementioned separation of the עֵרֶב from Israel (ver. 3). Eliashib the priest is probably the high priest of that name (iii. 1, xii. 10, 22). This may be inferred from the particular: set over (he being set over) the chambers of the house of our God; for such oversight of the chambers of the temple would certainly be entrusted to no simple priest, though this addition shows that this oversight did not absolutely form part of the high priest's office. For נָתַן, in the sense of to set, to place over, comp. 1 Kings ii. 35; the construction with בְּ instead of עַל is, however, unusual, but may be derived from the local signification of בְּ, upon, over. Ewald and Bertheau are for reading לִשְׁכֹּת instead of the sing. לִשְׁכַּת, because in ver. 5 it is not הַלִּשְׁכָּה that is spoken of, but a large chamber. לִשְׁכַּת may, however, be also understood collectively. Eliashib, being a relation of Tobiah (קָרוֹב like Ruth ii. 20), prepared him a chamber. The predicate of the sentence, ver. 4, follows in ver. 5 with וַיַּעַשׂ, in the form of a conclusion following the accessory sentence of the subject. How Tobiah was related to Eliashib is nowhere stated. Bertheau conjectures that it was perhaps only through the circumstance that Johanan, the son of Tobiah, had married a daughter of Meshullam ben Berechiah (vi. 18), who, according to iii. 30, was a priest or Levite, and might have been nearly related to the high priest. "A great chamber," perhaps made so by

throwing several chambers into one, as older expositors have inferred from ver. 9, according to which Nehemiah, after casting out the goods of Tobiah, had the chambers (plural) cleansed. The statement also in ver. 5*b*, that there (in this great chamber) were aforetime laid up not only the meat-offerings (*i.e.* oil and flour, the materials for them), the incense, and the sacred vessels, but also the tithe of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, and the heave-offerings of the priests, seems to confirm this view. This tenth is designated as מִצְוַת הַלְוִיִּם, the command of the Levites, *i.e.* what was apportioned to the Levites according to the law, the legal dues for which מִשְׁפָּט is elsewhere usual; comp. Deut. xviii. 3, 1 Sam. ii. 13. The heave-offering of the priest is the tenth of their tenth which the Levites had to contribute, x. 39.—Ver. 6. In all this, *i.e.* while this was taking place, I was not in Jerusalem; for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes I went to the king, and after the lapse of some days I entreated the king (נִשְׁאַל like 1 Sam. xx. 6, 28). What he entreated is not expressly stated; but it is obvious from what follows, "and I came to Jerusalem," that it was permission to return to Judea. Even at his first journey to Jerusalem, Nehemiah only requested leave to make a temporary sojourn there, without giving up his post of royal cup-bearer; comp. ii. 5 sq. Hence, after his twelve years' stay in Jerusalem, he was obliged to go to the king and remain some time at court, and then to beg for fresh leave of absence. How long he remained there cannot be determined,—לְקֵץ יָמִים, after the lapse of days, denoting no definite interval; comp. Gen. iv. 3. The view of several expositors, that יָמִים means a year, is devoid of proof. The stay of Nehemiah at court must, as already remarked, p. 149, have lasted longer than a year, since so many illegal acts on the part of the community as Nehemiah on his return discovered to have taken place, could not have occurred in so short a time. Artaxerxes is here called king of Babylon, because the Persian kings had conquered the kingdom of Babylon, and by this conquest obtained dominion over the Jews. Nehemiah uses this title to express also the fact that he had travelled to

Babylon.—Ver. 7. At his return he directed his attention to the evil committed by Eliashib in preparing a chamber in the court of the temple (לִּשְׁכַּת הַבַּיִת like Ezra viii. 15) for Tobiah. —Vers. 8, 9. This so greatly displeased him, that he cast out all the household stuff of Tobiah, and commanded the chamber to be purified, and the vessels of the house of God, the meat-offering and the frankincense, and probably the tenths and heave-offerings also, the enumeration being here only abbreviated, to be again brought into it. From the words *household* stuff, it appears that Tobiah used the chamber not as a dwelling when he came from time to time to Jerusalem.

Vers. 10–14. The payment of dues to the Levites, and the delivery of the tenths and first-fruits, had also been omitted. —Ver. 10. "And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given; and the Levites and singers who had to do the work, were fled every one to his field." The Levites, *i.e.* the assistants of the priests, the singers, and also the porters, who are not expressly mentioned in this passage, were accustomed to receive during the time of their ministry their daily portions of the tenths and first-fruits (xii. 47). When then these offerings were discontinued, they were obliged to seek their maintenance from the fields of the towns and villages in which they dwelt (xii. 28 sq.), and to forsake the service of the house of God. This is the meaning of the בָּרַח, to flee to the fields.—Ver. 11. "Then I contended with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken?" It was the duty of the סְגָנִים, the heads of the community (comp. ii. 16), to see that the tithes, etc., were regularly brought to the house of God. Hence Nehemiah rebukes them by asking: Why is the house of God forsaken? *i.e.* through the non-delivery of the dues. On נֶעֱזָב, comp. x. 40. This rebuke made the impression desired. Nehemiah assembled the Levites and set them in their place (comp. ix. 3, 2 Chron. xxx. 16, xxxv. 10), *i.e.* he brought them back to the performance of their official duties, and (ver. 12) all Judah (the whole community) brought the tithe of the corn, etc., into the store-chambers of the temple; comp. x. 38 sq., 2 Chron. xi. 11.—Ver. 13. "And I ap-

pointed as managers of the stores (or storehouses, *i.e.* magazines) Shemaiah the priest," etc. וָאוֹצְרָה, Hiphil, for אוֹצִירָה, is a denominative from אוֹצָר, to set some one over the treasure. Whether Shemaiah and Zadok are the individuals of these names mentioned in iii. 30; 29, cannot be determined. Zadok is called a סוֹפֵר, a writer or secretary, not a scribe in the Jewish sense of that word. A Pedaiah occurs viii. 4. וְעַל יָדָם, and at their hand Hanan, probably as an under-steward. These four were placed in this position because they were esteemed faithful. וְעֲלֵיהֶם, and it was (incumbent) on them (comp. 1 Chron. ix. 27, Ezra x. 12) to distribute to their brethren, *i.e.* to the priests and Levites, the portions due to them (ver. 10). Nehemiah concludes his account of this matter with the wish, that God may remember him concerning it (comp. v. 19), and not wipe out the kindnesses which he has shown to the house of God and its watches. תֶּמַח, abbreviated from the Hiphil תַּמְחֶה, to cause to wipe out. חֲסָדִים like 2 Chron. xxxv. 26. מִשְׁמָרִים (this form occurring only here), properly watches, watch-posts, here the office of attending on the service of the temple.

Vers. 15–22. *Field-work and trading on the Sabbath done away with.*—Ver. 15. In those days, *i.e.* when he was occupied with the arrangements for worship, Nehemiah saw in Judah (in the province) some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses, and also wine, grapes, and figs, and all kinds of burdens, and bringing it to Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day. The מְבִיאִים is again taken up by the second וּמְבִיאִים, and more closely defined by the addition: to Jerusalem. Robinson describes an ancient wine-press in his *Biblical Researches*, p. 178. On בָּל־מַשָּׂא, comp. Jer. xvii. 21 sq. וָאָעִיד, and I testified (against them), *i.e.* warned them on the day wherein they sold victuals. צַיִד, food, victuals; Ps. cxxxii. 15, Josh. ix. 5, 14. He warned them no longer to sell victuals on the Sabbath-day. Bertheau, on the contrary, thinks that Nehemiah saw how the market people in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem started while it was still the Sabbath, not for the purpose of selling during that day, but for that of being early in the market

on the next day, or the next but one. The text, however, offers no support to such a notion. In ver. 16 it is expressly said that selling took place in Jerusalem on the Sabbath; and the very bringing thither of wine, grapes, etc., on the Sabbath, presupposes that the sale of these articles was transacted on that day.—Ver. 16. Tyrians also were staying therein, bringing fish and all kind of ware (מְכֵר), and sold it on the Sabbath to the sons of Judah and in Jerusalem. יָשַׁב is by most expositors translated, to dwell; but it is improbable that Tyrians would at that time dwell or settle at Jerusalem: hence יָשַׁב here means to sit, *i.e.* to stay awhile undisturbed, to tarry.—Vers. 17, 18. Nehemiah reproved the nobles of Judah for this profanation of the Sabbath, reminding them how their fathers (forefathers) by such acts (as rebuked *e.g.* by Jeremiah, chap. xvii. 21 sq.) had brought upon the people and the city great evil, *i.e.* the misery of their former exile, and present oppression; remarking in addition, "and ye are bringing more wrath upon Israel, profaning the Sabbath," *i.e.* you are only increasing the wrath of God already lying upon Israel, by your desecration of the Sabbath. Comp. on the last thought, Ezra x. 10, 14. He also instituted measures for the abolition of this trespass. —Ver. 19. He commanded that the gates of Jerusalem should be closed when it began to be dark before the Sabbath, and not re-opened till the Sabbath was over. In the description of this measure the command and its execution are intermixed, or rather the execution is brought forward as the chief matter, and the command inserted therein. "And it came to pass, as soon as the gates of Jerusalem were dark (*i.e.* when it was dark in the gates) before the Sabbath, I commanded, and the gates were shut; and I commanded that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath," *i.e.* after sunset on the Sabbath-day. צָלַל, in the sense of to grow dark, occurs in Hebrew only here, and is an Aramæan expression. Nehemiah also placed some of his servants at the gates, that no burdens, *i.e.* no wares, victuals, etc., might be brought in on the Sabbath. אֲשֶׁר is wanting before לֹא יָבוֹא; the command is directly alluded to, and, with

the command, must be supplied before לֹא יָבוֹא. The placing of the watch was necessary, because the gates could not be kept strictly closed during the whole of the day, and ingress and egress thus entirely forbidden to the inhabitants.—Ver. 20. Then the merchants and sellers of all kinds of ware remained throughout the night outside Jerusalem, once and twice. Thus, because egress from the city could not be refused to the inhabitants, the rest of the Sabbath was broken outside the gates. Nehemiah therefore put an end to this misdemeanour also.—Ver. 21. He warned the merchants to do this no more, threatening them: "If you do (this) again (*i.e.* pass the night before the walls), I will lay hands on you," *i.e.* drive you away by force. The form לָנִים for לָנִים occurs only here as a "semi-passive" formation; comp. Ewald, § 151, *b*. From that time forth they came no more on the Sabbath.—Ver. 22. A further measure taken by Nehemiah for the sanctification of the Sabbath according to the law, is so briefly narrated, that it does not plainly appear in what it consisted. "I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and they should come keep the gates to sanctify the Sabbath-day." The meaning of the words בָּאִים שֹׁמְרִים הַשְּׁעָרִים is doubtful. The Masoretes have separated בָּאִים from שֹׁמְרִים by Sakeph; while de Wette, Bertheau, and others combine these words: and that they should come to the keepers of the doors. This translation cannot be justified by the usage of the language; for בּוֹא with an accusative of the person occurs only, as may be proved, in prophetical and poetical diction (Job xx. 22; Prov. x. 24; Isa. xli. 25; Ezek. xxxii. 11), and then in the sense of to come upon some one, to surprise him, and never in the meaning of to come or go to some one. Nor does this unjustifiable translation give even an appropriate sense. Why should the Levites go to the doorkeepers to sanctify the Sabbath? Bertheau thinks it was for the purpose of solemnly announcing to the doorkeepers that the holy day had begun, or to advertise them by some form of consecration of its commencement. This, however, would have been either a useless or unmeaning ceremony. Hence we must relinquish this connection of

the words, and either combine שֹׁמְרִים הַשְּׁעָרִים as an asyndeton with בָּאִים: coming and watching the gates, or: coming as watchers of the gates; and then the measure taken would consist in the appointment of certain Levites to keep the gates on the Sabbath, as well as the ordinary keepers, thus consecrating the Sabbath as a holy day above ordinary days. Nehemiah concludes the account of the abolition of this irregularity, as well as the preceding, by invoking a blessing upon himself; comp. rem. on ver. 14. חוּסָה עַל like Joel ii. 17.

Vers. 23–29. *Marriages with foreign wives dissolved.*—Vers. 23 and 24. "In those days I also saw, *i.e.* visited, the Jews who had brought home Ashdodite, Ammonite, and Moabite wives; and half of their children spoke the speech of Ashdod, because they understood not how to speak the Jews' language, and according to the speech of one and of another people." It is not said, I saw Jews; but, the Jews who . . . Hence Bertheau rightly infers, that Nehemiah at this time found an opportunity of seeing them, perhaps upon a journey through the province. From the circumstance, too, that a portion of the children of these marriages were not able to speak the language of the Jews, but spoke the language of Ashdod, or of this or that nation from which their mothers were descended, we may conclude with tolerable certainty, that these people dwelt neither in Jerusalem nor in the midst of the Jewish community, but on the borders of the nations to which their wives belonged. הוֹשִׁיב like Ezra x. 2. וּבְנֵיהֶם precedes in an absolute sense: and as for their children, one half (of them) spake. יְהוּדִית (comp. 2 Kings xviii. 26, Isa. xxxvi. 11, 2 Chron. xxxii. 18) is the language of the Jewish community, the vernacular Hebrew. The sentence וְאֵינָם וגו׳ is an explanatory parenthesis, וְכִלְשׁוֹן עַם וָעָם still depending upon מְדַבֵּר: spake according to the language, *i.e.* spake the language, of this and that people (of their mothers). The speech of Ashdod is that of the Philistines, which, according to Hitzig (*Urgeschichte u. Mythol. der Philistäer*), belonged to the Indo-Germanic group. The languages, however, of the Moabites and Ammonites were

undoubtedly Shemitic, but so dialectically different from the Hebrew, that they might be regarded as foreign tongues. —Ver. 25. With these people also Nehemiah contended (אָרִיב like vers. 11 and 17), cursed them, smote certain of their men, and plucked off their hair (מָרַט, see rem. on Ezra ix. 3), and made them swear by God: Ye shall not give your daughters, etc.; comp. x. 31. On the recurrence of such marriages after the separations effected by Ezra of those existing at his arrival at Jerusalem, comp. the remark, p. 135 sq. Nehemiah did not insist on the immediate dissolution of these marriages, but caused the men to swear that they would desist from such connections, setting before them, in ver. 26, how grievous a sin they were committing. "Did not Solomon, king of Israel, sin on account of these?" (עַל אֵלֶּה, on account of strange wives). And among many nations there was no king like him (comp. 1 Kings iii. 12 sq., 2 Chron. i. 12); and he was beloved of his God (alluding to 2 Sam. xii. 24), and God made him king over all Israel (1 Kings iv. 1); and even him did foreign women cause to sin (comp. 1 Kings xi. 1–3). "And for you is it heard to do (that ye do) all this great evil, to transgress against our God, and to marry strange wives?" Bertheau thus rightly understands the sentence: "If the powerful King Solomon was powerless to resist the influence of foreign wives, and if he, the beloved God, found in his relation to God no defence against the sin to which they seduced him, is it not unheard of for you to commit so great an evil?" He also rightly explains הֲנִשָּׁמַע according to Deut. ix. 32; while Gesenius in his *Thes.* still takes it, like Rambach, as the first person imperf.: *nobisne morem geramus faciendo*; or: Should we obey you to do so great an evil? (de Wette); which meaning—apart from the consideration that not obedience, but only toleration of the illegal act, is here in question—greatly weakens, if it does not quite destroy, the contrast between Solomon and לָכֶם.—Ver. 28. Nehemiah acted with greater severity towards one of the sons of Joiada the high priest, and son-in-law of Sanballat. He drove him from him (מֵעָלַי, that he might not be a burden to me). The reason for

this is not expressly stated, but is involved in the fact that he was son-in-law to Sanballat, *i.e.* had married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite (ii. 10), who was so hostile to Nehemiah and to the Jewish community in general, and would not comply with the demand of Nehemiah that he should dismiss this wife. In this case, Nehemiah was obliged to interfere with authority. For this marriage was a pollution of the priesthood, and a breach of the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. Hence he closes the narrative of this occurrence with the wish, ver. 29, that God would be mindful of them (לָהֶם, of those who had done such evil) on account of this pollution, etc., *i.e.* would punish or chastise them for it. גְּאֻלֵי, *stat. constr. pl.* from גְּאֻל, pollution (*plurale tant.*). It was a pollution of the priesthood to marry a heathen woman, such marriage being opposed to the sacredness of the priestly office, which a priest was to consider even in the choice of a wife, and because of which he might marry neither a whore, nor a feeble nor a divorced woman, while the high priest might marry only a virgin of his own people (Lev. xxi. 7, 14). The son of Joiada who had married a daughter of Sanballat was not indeed his presumptive successor (Johanan, xii. 11), for then he would have been spoken of by name, but a younger son, and therefore a simple priest; he was, however, so nearly related to the high priest, that by his marriage with a heathen woman the holiness of the high-priestly house was polluted, and therewith also "the covenant of the priesthood," *i.e.* not the covenant of the everlasting priesthood which God granted to Phinehas for his zeal (Num. xxv. 13), but the covenant which God concluded with the tribe of Levi, the priesthood, and the Levites, by choosing the tribe of Levi, and of that tribe Aaron and his descendants, to be His priest (לְכַהֲנוֹ לִי, Ex. xxviii. 1). This covenant required, on the part of the priests, that they should be "holy to the Lord" (Lev. xxi. 6, 8), who had chosen them to be ministers of His sanctuary and stewards of His grace.

Josephus (*Ant.* xi. 7. 2) relates the similar fact, that Manasseh, a brother of the high priest Jaddua, married

Nikaso, a daughter of the satrap Sanballat, a Cuthite; that when the Jewish authorities on that account excluded him from the priesthood, he established, by the assistance of his father-in-law, the temple and worship on Mount Gerizim (xi. 8. 2–4), and that many priests made common cause with him. Now, though Josephus calls this Manasseh a brother of Jaddua, thus making him a grandson of Joiada, and transposing the establishment of the Samaritan worship on Gerizim to the last years of Darius Codomannus and the first of Alexander of Macedon, it can scarcely be misunderstood that, notwithstanding these discrepancies, the same occurrence which Nehemiah relates in the present verses is intended by Josephus. The view of older theologians, to which also Petermann (art. Samaria in Herzog's *Realenc.* xiii. p. 366 sq.) assents, that there were two Sanballats, one in the days of Nehemiah, the other in the time of Alexander the Great, and that both had sons-in-law belonging to the high-priestly family, is very improbable; and the transposition of the fact by Josephus to the times of Darius Codomannus and Alexander accords with the usual and universally acknowledged incorrectness of his chronological combinations. He makes, *e.g.*, Nehemiah arrive at Jerusalem in the twenty-fifth year of Xerxes, instead of the twentieth of Artaxerxes, while Xerxes reigned only twenty years.

Vers. 30 and 31. Nehemiah concludes his work with a short summary of what he had effected for the community. "I cleansed them from all strangers" (comp. ver. 23 sq., ix. 2, xiii. 1 sq.), "and appointed the services for the priests and Levites, each in his business, and for the wood-offering at times appointed (x. 35), and for the first-fruits" (x. 36 sq.). The suffix to וּמִטַּהֲרָתִם refers to the Jews. נֵכָר, strange, means foreign heathen customs, and chiefly marriages with heathen women, ver. 23 sq., ix. 2, xiii. 1. הֶעֱמִיד מִשְׁמָרוֹת, properly to set a watch, here used in the more general sense of to appoint posts of service for the priests and Levites, *i.e.* to arrange for the attendance upon those offices which they had to perform at their posts in the temple, according to the law; comp. x. 37, 40, xii. 44–46, xiii. 13. וּלְקָרְבָּן and

וְלַבִּכּוּרִים, ver. 31, still depend on וְאַעֲמִידָה מִשְׁמָרוֹת : I appointed the attendance for the delivery of the wood for the altar at appointed times (comp. x. 35), and for the first-fruits, *i.e.* for bringing into the sanctuary the heave-offering for the priests. The בִּכּוּרִים are named as *pars pro toto*, instead of all the תְּרוּמוֹת prescribed by the law. On the arrangements connected with these two subjects, viz. the purification from heathen practices, and the restoration of the regular performance of divine worship, was Nehemiah's whole energy concentrated, after the fortification of Jerusalem by a wall of circumvallation had been completed. He thus earned a lasting claim to the gratitude of the congregation of his fellow-countrymen that returned from Babylon, and could conclude his narrative with the prayer that God would remember him for good. On this frequently-repeated supplication (comp. vers. 14, 22, and v. 19) Rambach justly remarks: *magnam Nehemiæ pietatem spirat.* This piety is, however—as we cannot fail also to perceive—strongly pervaded by the legal spirit of post-Babylonian Judaism.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

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§ I. NAME, CONTENTS, OBJECT, AND UNITY OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

THIS book bears the name of אֶסְתֵּר or מְגִלַּת אֶסְתֵּר, book of Esther, also briefly that of מְגִלָּה with the Rabbis, from Esther the Jewess, afterwards raised to the rank of queen, to whom the Jews were indebted for their deliverance from the destruction with which they were threatened, as related in this book.

Its contents are as follows:—Ahashverosh, king of Persia, gave, in the third year of his reign, a banquet to the grandees of his kingdom at Susa; and on the seventh day of this feast, when his heart was merry with wine, required the Queen Vashti to appear before his guests and show her beauty. When she refused to come at the king's commandment, she was divorced, at the proposal of his seven counsellors; and this divorce was published by an edict throughout the whole kingdom, lest the example of the queen should have a bad effect upon the obedience of other wives to their husbands (chap. i.). When the king, after his wrath was appeased, began again to feel a tenderness towards his divorced wife, the most beautiful virgins in the whole kingdom were, at the advice of his servants, brought to the house of the women at Susa, that the king might choose a wife at his pleasure. Among these virgins was Esther the Jewess, the foster-daughter and near relative of Mordochai, a Benjamite living in exile, who, when brought before the king, after the customary preparation, so pleased him, that he chose her for his queen. Her intercourse with Mordochai continued after her reception into the royal palace; and

during his daily visits in the gate of the palace, he discovered a conspiracy against the life of the king, and thus rendered him an important service (chap. ii.). Ahashverosh afterwards made Haman, an Agagite, his prime minister or grand vizier, and commanded all the king's servants to pay him royal honours, *i.e.* to bow down before him. When this was refused by Mordochai, Haman's indignation was so great, that he resolved to destroy all the Jews in the whole empire. For this purpose he appointed, by means of the lot, both the month and day; and obtained from the king permission to prepare an edict to all the provinces of the kingdom, appointing the thirteenth day of the twelfth month for the extermination of the Jews throughout the whole realm (chap. iii). Mordochai apprised Queen Esther of this cruel command, and so strongly urged her to apply to the king on behalf of her people, that she resolved, at the peril of her life, to appear before him unbidden. When she was so favourably received by him, that he promised beforehand to grant whatever she had to request, even to the half of his kingdom, she first entreated that the king and Haman should eat with her that day. During the repast, the king inquired concerning her request, and she answered that she would declare it on the following day, if the king and Haman would again eat with her (iv. 1–8). Haman, greatly elated at this distinction, had the mortification, on his departure from the queen, of beholding Mordochai, who did not rise up before him, in the gate of the palace; and returning to his house, formed, by the advice of his wife and friends, the resolution of hanging Mordochai next day upon a gallows; for which purpose he immediately caused a tree fifty cubits high to be prepared (v. 9–14). Next night, however, the king, being unable to sleep, caused the records of the kingdom to be read to him, and was thereby reminded of the obligation he was under to Mordochai. When, on this occasion, he learnt that Mordochai had as yet received no reward for this service, he sent for Haman, who had resorted thus early to the court of the palace for the purpose of obtaining the royal permission for the execution of Mordochai, and

asked him what should be done to the man whom the king desired to honour. Haman, thinking this honour concerned himself, proposed the very highest, and was by the king's command obliged, to his extreme mortification, himself to pay this honour to Mordochai, his wife and friends interpreting this occurrence as an omen of his approaching ruin (vi.). When the king and Haman afterwards dined with Esther, the queen begged for her life and that of her people, and pointed to Haman as the enemy who desired to exterminate the Jews. Full of wrath at this information, the king went into the garden of the palace; while Haman, remaining in the room, fell at the feet of the queen to beg for his life. When the king, returning to the banquet chamber, saw Haman lying on the queen's couch, he thought he was offering violence to the queen, passed sentence of death upon him, caused him to be hanged upon the gallows he had erected for Mordochai (vii.), and on the same day gave his house to the queen, and made Mordochai his prime minister in the place of Haman (viii. 1, 2). Hereupon Esther earnestly entreated the reversal of Haman's edict against the Jews; and since, according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, an edict issued by the king and sealed with the seal-royal could not be repealed, the king commanded Mordochai to prepare and publish throughout the whole kingdom another edict, whereby the Jews were permitted, to their great joy and that of many other inhabitants of the realm (viii. 3–17), not only to defend themselves against the attacks of their enemies on the appointed day, but also to kill and plunder them. In consequence of this, the Jews assembled on the appointed day to defend their lives against their adversaries; and being supported by the royal officials, through fear of Mordochai, they slew in Susa 500, and in the whole kingdom 75,000 men, besides 300 more in Susa on the day following, but did not touch the goods of the slain. They then celebrated in Susa the fifteenth, and in the rest of the kingdom the fourteenth, day of the month Adar, as a day of feasting and gladness (ix. 1–19). Hereupon Mordochai and Queen Esther sent letters to all the Jews in the kingdom, in which

they ordered the yearly celebration of this day, by the name of the feast of Purim, *i.e.* lots, because Haman had cast lots concerning the destruction of the Jews (ix. 20–32). In conclusion, the documents in which are described the acts of Ahashverosh and the greatness of Mordochai, who had exerted himself for the good of his people, are pointed out (chap. x.).

From this glance at its contents, it is obvious that the *object* of this book is to narrate the events in remembrance of which the feast of Purim was celebrated, and to transmit to posterity an account of its origin. The aim of the entire contents of this book being the institution of this festival, with which it concludes, there can be no reasonable doubt of its *integrity*, which is also generally admitted. Bertheau, however, after the example of J. D. Michaelis, has declared the sections ix. 20–28 and 29–32 to be later additions, incapable of inclusion in the closely connected narrative of chap. i.–ix. 19, and regards chap. x. as differing from it both in matter and language. The sections in question are said to be obviously distinct from the rest of the book. But all that is adduced in support of this assertion is, that the words קִיַּם, to institute (ix. 21, 27, 29, 31), סוּף, to come to an end, to cease (ix. 28), the plural צוֹמוֹת, fasts (ix. 31), and an allusion to the decree in a direct manner, occur only in these sections. In such a statement, however, no kind of consideration is given to the circumstance that there was no opportunity for the use of סוּף קִיַּם and the plur. צוֹמוֹת in the other chapters. Hence nothing remains but the direct introduction of the decree, which is obviously insufficient to establish a peculiarity of language. Still weaker is the proof offered of diversity of matter between ix. 20–32 and chap. i.–ix. 19; Bertheau being unable to make this appear in any way, but by wrongly attributing to the word קִיַּם the meaning: to confirm a long-existing custom.

§ II. HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

The feast of Purim is mentioned, 2 Macc. xv. 36, under the name of *Μαρδοχαϊκὴ ἡμέρα*, as a festival existing in the

time of Nicanor (about 160 B.C.); and Josephus tells us, *Ant.* xi. 6. 13, that it was kept by the Jews during a whole week. Now the institution of this festival must have been based upon an historical event similar to that related in this book. Hence even this is sufficient to show that the assertion of Semler, Oeder, and others, that this book contains a fictitious parable (*confictam esse universam parabolam*), is a notion opposed to common sense. For if this festival has been from of old celebrated by the Jews all over the world, it must owe its origin to an occurrence which affected the whole Jewish people, and the names Purim and Mordochai's day are a pledge, that the essential contents of this book are based upon an historical foundation. The name Purim (*i.e.* lots), derived from the Persian, can be suitably explained in no other manner than is done in this book, viz. by the circumstance that lots were cast on the fate of the Jews by a Persian official, who contemplated their extermination, for the purpose of fixing on a favourable day for this act; while the name, Mordochai's day, preserves the memory of the individual to whom the Jews were indebted for their deliverance. Hence all modern critics admit, that at least an historical foundation is thus guaranteed, while a few doubt the strictly historical character of the whole narrative, and assert that while the feast of Purim was indeed celebrated in remembrance of a deliverance of the Jews in the Persian empire, it was the existence of this festival, and the accounts given by those who celebrated it, which gave rise to the written narrative of the history of Esther (thus Bertheau). On the other hand, the historical character of the whole narrative has been defended not only by Hävernick (*Einl.*), M. Baumgarten (*de fide libri Estheræ*, 1839), and others, but also, and upon valid grounds, by Staehelin (*spez. Einl. in die kanon. BB. des A. T.* § 51 sq.). The objections that have been raised to its credibility have arisen, first from the habit of making subjective probability the standard of historical truth, and next from an insufficient or imperfect attention to the customs, manners, and state of affairs at the Persian court on the one hand, or an incorrect view of the meaning

the text on the other. When, *e.g.*, Bertheau as well as Bleek (*Einleit.* p. 286) says, "The whole is of such a nature that the unprejudiced observer cannot easily regard it as a purely historical narrative," Cleric. (*dissert. de scriptoribus libr. hist.* § 10) far more impartially and correctly decides: *Mirabilis sane est et παράδοξος* (*quis enim neget?*) *historia, sed multa mirabilia et a moribus nostris aliena olim apud orientales ut apud omnes alios populos contigerunt.* The fact that King Ahashverosh should grant his grand vizier Haman permission to publish an edict commanding the extermination of the Jews throughout his empire, is not challenged by either Bleek or Bertheau; and, indeed, we need not go so far as the despotic states of the East to meet with similar occurrences; the Parisian massacre of St. Bartholomew being a sufficient proof that the apparently incredible may be actual reality.[1] And all the other statements of this book, however seemingly unaccountable to us, become conceivable when we consider the character of King Ahashverosh, *i.e.*, as is now generally admitted, of Xerxes, who is described by Greek and Roman historians as a very luxurious, voluptuous, and at the same time an extremely cruel tyrant. A despot who, after his army had been hospitably entertained on its march to Greece, and an enormous sum offered towards defraying the expenses of the war, by Pythius the rich Lydian, could be betrayed into such fury by the request of the latter, that of his

[1] Rosenmüller (*bibl. Altertumsk.* i. 1, p. 379) calls to mind Mithridates king of Pontus, who, when at war with the Romans, secretly issued an order to all the satraps and local authorities of his realm, to assassinate all Romans, without distinction of age or sex, on an appointed day, in consequence of which 80,000 perished on one day; also the pasha of Zaid Mehmed in the sixteenth century, who surprised the nation of the Druses, and put to death all whom he met with (comp. Arvieux, *merkw. Nachr.* i. p. 391); and then continues: "It is almost more incredible that a ruler should, from the blindness of religious zeal, either execute or drive out of his realm 100,000 of his most diligent and prosperous subjects; yet the history of modern Europe offers us, in Ferdinand the Catholic, who chased 300,000 Jews from Spain, and Louis XIV., who, after putting some thousands of Protestants to death, banished hundreds of thousands from France, examples of such incredible events."

five sons who were in the army the eldest might be released, to be the comfort of his declining years, as to command this son to be hewn into two pieces, and to make his army pass between them (Herod. vii. c. 37–39; Seneca, *de ira*, vii. 17); a tyrant who could behead the builders of the bridge over the Hellespont, because a storm had destroyed the bridge, and command the sea to be scourged, and to be chained by sinking a few fetters (Herod. vii. 35); a debauchee who, after his return from Greece, sought to drive away his vexation at the shameful defeat he had undergone, by revelling in sensual pleasures (Herod. ix. 108 sq.); so frantic a tyrant was capable of all that is told us in the book of Esther of Ahashverosh.

Bleek's objections to the credibility of the narrative consist of the following points: *a.* That it is inconceivable that if the Persian despot had formed a resolution to exterminate all the Jews in his kingdom, he would, even though urged by a favourite, have proclaimed this by a royal edict published throughout all the provinces of his kingdom twelve months previously. In advancing this objection, however, Bleek has not considered that Haman cast lots for the appointment of the day on which his project was to be carried into execution; the Persians being, according to Herod. iii. 128, Cyrop. i. 6. 46, frequently accustomed to resort to the lot; while not only in Strabo's time, but to the present day also, everything is with them decided according to the dicta of soothsayers and astrologers. If, then, the lot had declared the day in question to be a propitious one for the matter contemplated, the haughty Haman would not reflect that the premature publication of the edict would afford a portion of the Jews the opportunity of escaping destruction by flight. Such reflections are inconsistent with absolute confidence in the power of magical decisions; and even if what was possible had ensued, he would still have attained his main object of driving the Jews out of the realm, and appropriating their possessions.—*b.* That at *this* time Judea, which was then almost wholly reinhabited by Jews, was among the provinces of Persia, and that hence the king's edict commanded the

extermination of almost all the population of that country. This, he says, it is difficult to believe; and not less so, that when the first edict was not repealed, the second, which granted the Jews permission to defend themselves against their enemies, should have resulted everywhere in such success to the Jews, even though, from fear of Mordochai the new favourite, they were favoured by the royal officials, that all should in all countries submit to them, and that they should kill 75,000 men, equally with themselves subjects of the king. To this it may be replied: that Judea was, in relation to the whole Persian realm, a very unimportant province, and in the time of Xerxes, as is obvious from the book of Ezra, by no means "almost wholly," but only very partially, inhabited by Jews, who were, moreover, regarded with such hostility by the other races dwelling among them, that the execution of the decree cannot appear impossible even here. With regard to the result of the second edict, the slaughter of 75,000 men, this too is perfectly comprehensible. For since, according to Medo-Persian law, the formal repeal of a royal edict issued according to legal form was impracticable, the royal officials would understand the sense and object of the second, and not trouble themselves much about the execution of the first, but, on the contrary, make the second published by Mordochai, who was at that time the highest dignitary in the realm, their rule of action for the purpose of ensuring his favour. Round numbers, moreover, of the slain are evidently given; *i.e.* they are given upon only approximate statements, and are not incredibly high, when the size and population of the kingdom are considered. The Persian empire, in its whole extent from India to Ethiopia, must have contained a population of at least 100,000,000, and the number of Jews in the realm must have amounted to from two to three millions. A people of from two to three millions would include, moreover, at least from 500,000 to 700,000 capable of bearing arms, and these might in battle against their enemies slay 75,000 men. Susa, the capital, would not have been less than the Stamboul of the present day, and would probably contain at least

half a million of inhabitants; and it by no means surpasses the bounds of probability, that in such a town 500 men should be slain in one day, and 300 more on the following, in a desperate street fight. Nor can the numbers stated be looked upon as too high a computation. The figures are only rendered improbable by the notion, that the Jews themselves suffered no loss at all. Such an assumption, however, is by no means justified by the circumstance, that such losses are unmentioned. It is the general custom of the scriptural historians to give in their narratives of wars and battles only the numbers of the slain among the vanquished foes, and not to mention the losses of the victors. We are justified, however, in supposing that the war was of an aggravated character, from the fact that it bore not only a national, but also a religious character. Haman's wrath against Mordochai was so exasperated by the information that he was a Jew, that he resolved upon the extermination of the people of Mordochai, *i.e.* of all the Jews in the realm (iii. 4–6). To obtain the consent of the king, he accused the Jews as a scattered and separated people, whose laws were different from the laws of all other nations, of not observing the laws of the king. This accusation was, "from the standpoint of Parseeism, the gravest which could have been made against the Jews" (Haev. *Einl.* ii. 1, p. 348). The separation of the Jews from all other people, a consequence of the election of Israel to be the people of God, has at all times inflamed and nourished the hatred of the Gentiles and of the children of this world against them. This hatred, which was revived by the edict of Haman, could not be quenched by the counter-edict of Mordochai. Though this edict so inspired the royal officials with fear of the powerful minister, that they took part with, instead of against the Jews, yet the masses of the people, and especially the populations of towns, would not have paid such respect to it as to restrain their hatred against the Jews. The edict of Mordochai did not forbid the execution of that of Haman, but only allowed the Jews to stand up for their lives, and to slay such enemies as should attack them (viii. 11). The heathen were not thereby restrained from under-

taking that fight against the Jews, in which they were eventually the losers.—When, however, *c.* Bleek finds it "utterly unnatural" that, after the Jews had slain 500 of their foes in one day in Susa, the king should, at the request of Esther, whose vengeance and thirst of blood were not yet appeased, have granted an edict that the slaughter should be renewed on the following day, when no attack upon the Jews was permitted, his objection rests upon a sheer misunderstanding of the whole affair. The queen only requested that "it should be granted to the Jews in Susa to do to-morrow also, according to the decree of to-day" (ix. 13), *i.e.* "to stand for their lives, and slay all who should assault them" (viii. 11). This petition presupposes that the heathen population of Susa would renew the attack upon the Jews on the next day. Hence it is evident that Bleek's assertion, that the heathen were not allowed on that day to renew their attack upon the Jews, is an erroneous notion, and one at variance with the text. Together with this erroneous assumption, the reproach of vengeance and bloodthirstiness raised against Esther is also obviated. Her foresight in securing the lives of her people against renewed attacks, betrays neither revenge nor cruelty. Unless the heathen population had attacked the Jews on the second day, the latter would have had no opportunity of slaying their foes. How little, too, the Jews in general were influenced by a desire of vengeance, is shown by the fact so repeatedly brought forward, that they laid not their hand on the spoil of the slain (ix. 9, 15), though this was granted them by the royal edict (viii. 11).—*d.* Bleek's remaining objections are based partly upon misrepresentations of the state of affairs, and partly upon erroneous notions of Eastern customs.[1]

[1] *E.g.* the remark that, though *all* Susa was thrown into consternation by the edict of Haman, it rejoiced greatly at the second; where Bleek has inserted *all* to make the matter appear incredible by exaggeration. In the text we only read "the city of Susa was perplexed" (iii. 15), "the city of Susa rejoiced and was glad" (viii. 15); *i.e.*, in the city of Susa there was in the one instance perplexity, in the other rejoicing. Also that the king published a special decree in all the provinces of his kingdom, that every man should be master in his own house,—a misin-

If, then, all the objections raised against the credibility of the narrative may be thus disposed of, we are perfectly justified in adhering to a belief in the historical character of the whole book, since even Bleek cannot deny, that some at least of "the customs and arrangements of the Persian court are both vividly and faithfully depicted." To this must be added the statement of the names of the individuals who take part in the narrative, *e.g.* the courtiers, i. 10; the seven princes of Persia, i. 14; the keeper of the women's houses, ii. 8 and 14; the ten sons of Haman, ix. 7–9, and others; and the reference to the book of the chronicles of the Medes and Persians, as the documents in which not only the acts of Ahashverosh, but also the greatness of Mordochai, were written (x. 2). As the numerous and otherwise wholly unknown names could not possibly be invented, so neither can the reference to the book of the chronicles be a mere literary fiction. When, therefore, Bertheau thinks, that the writer of this book, by thus bringing forward so many small details, by stating the names of otherwise unknown individuals, and especially by giving so much accurate information concerning Persian affairs and institutions,—the correctness of which is in all respects confirmed both by the statements of classical authors and our present increased knowledge of Oriental matters,—certainly proves himself acquainted with the scene in which the narrative takes place, with Persian names and affairs, but not possessed also of an historical knowledge of the actual course of events; we can perceive

terpretation of the passage i. 22; see the explanation of this verse. Finally, the difficulty that Esther, as queen-consort, should have concealed her nationality so long as is stated in the narrative, can exist only for those unacquainted with the state of affairs in the harem of an Oriental prince. The Persian monarchs, who had a fresh concubine for each day, would certainly be ignorant of the descent of each; and though, according to Herod. iii. 84, the queens were generally of the race of the Achæmenides, yet the same historian also relates (iii. 31) of Cambyses, that the royal δικασταί declared to him, with respect to his marriage with a sister, that: τῷ βασιλεύοντι Περσέων ἐξεῖναι ποιέειν τὸ ἂν βούληται. The case, too, of a concubine being raised to the rank of queen by a Persian monarch is not inconceivable.

in this last inference only the unsupported decision of a subjectivistic antipathy to the contents of the book.

§ III. AUTHORSHIP AND DATE OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

No certain information concerning the *author* of this book is obtainable. The talmudic statement in *Baba bathr.* 15. 1, that it was written by the men of the Great Synagogue, is devoid of historical value; and the opinion of Clem. Al., Aben Ezra, and others, that Mordochai was its author, as is also inferred from ix. 20 and 23 by de Wette, is decidedly a mistaken one,—the writer plainly distinguishing in this passage between himself and Mordochai, who sent letters concerning the feast of Purim to the Jews in the realm of Persia. Other conjectures are still more unfounded. The date, too, of its composition can be only approximately determined. The opinion that in ix. 19 the long existence of the feast of Purim is presupposed, cannot be raised to the rank of a certainty. Nor does the book contain allusions pointing to the era of the Greek universal monarchy. This is admitted by Stähelin, who remarks, p. 178: "The most seemingly valid argument in support of this view, viz. that Persian customs are explained in this book, i. 1, 13 (for vii. 8, usually cited with these passages, is out of the question, and is the king's speech in answer to viii. 5), is refuted by the consideration, that the book was written for the information of Palestinian Jews; while Hävernick, ii. 1, p. 361, refers to a case in Bohaeddin, in which this biographer of Saladin, p. 70, though writing for Arabs, explains an Arabian custom with respect to prisoners of war." On the other hand, both the reference to the chronicles of the Medes and Persians (x. 2), and the intimate acquaintance of the writer with Susa and the affairs of the Persian monarchy, decidedly point to the fact, that the date of its composition preceded the destruction of the Persian empire, and may perhaps have been that of Artaxerxes I. or Darius Nothus, about 400 B.C. The omission, moreover, of all reference to Judah and Jerusalem, together with the absence not only of theo-

cratic notions, but of a specially religious view of circumstances, favour the view that the author lived not in Palestine, but in the more northern provinces of the Persian realm, probably in Susa itself. For though his mode of representing events, which does not even once lead him to mention the name of God, is not caused by the irreligiousness of the author, but rather by the circumstance, that he neither wished to depict the persons whose acts he was narrating as more godly than they really were, nor to place the whole occurrence — which manifests, indeed, the dealings of Divine Providence with the Jewish people, but not the dealings of Jahve with the nation of Israel—under a point of view alien to the actors and the event itself, yet a historian acquainted with the theocratic ordinances and relations of Judah would scarcely have been capable of so entirely ignoring them.

§ IV. THE CANONICITY OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

The book of Esther has always formed a portion of the Hebrew canon. It is included also among the twenty-two books which, according to Josephus, *c. Ap.* i. 8, were acknowledged by the Jews as δικαίως πεπιστευμένα. For Josephus, who repeatedly asserts, that the history of the Hebrews from Moses to Artaxerxes was written by the prophets and worthy to be believed, relates also in his *Jewish Antiquities* (l. xi. c. 6) the history of Esther, Mordochai, and Haman. Certain critics have indeed desired to infer, from the statement in the Talmud, *Jerush. Megill.* 70. 4, that "among the eighty elders who contended against the institution of the feast of Purim by Esther and Mordochai as an innovation in the law, there were more than thirty prophets," that the Jews did not formerly attribute the same authority to the book of Esther as to the other Scriptures (Movers, *loci quidam historiæ canonis V. T.* p. 28; Bleek, *Einl.* p. 404); but even Bertheau doubts whether this passage refers to the whole book of Esther. For it treats unambiguously only of the fact chap. ix. 29–32, which is very specially stated

to have been an institution of Esther and Mordochai, and concerning which differences of opinion might prevail among the Rabbis. The further remark of Movers, *l.c.*, that the oldest patristic testimonies to the inclusion of this book in the canon are of such a nature, *ut ex iis satis verisimiliter effici possit, eum tunc recens canoni adjectum esse*, because it occupies the last place in the series of O. T. writings given by Origen, Epiphanius, and Jerome, according to Jewish authority, and because the canons of the Greek Church, which more accurately enumerate the books received by the synagogue, do not contain the book of Esther, is also incorrect. For (1.) the lists of the canonical books of the O. T. given by Origen (in Euseb. *hist. eccl.* vi. 25) and Epiphanius give these books not according to their order in the Hebrew canon, but to that of the Alexandrinian version, while only Jerome places the book of Esther last. (2.) In the lists of the Greek Church this book is omitted only in that given in Euseb. *hist. eccl.* iv. 26, from the *eclogæ* of Melito, Bishop of Sardis, and in that of Gregory of Nazianzen, while it is included in those of Origen and Cyril of Jerusalem; a circumstance which leads to the supposition that it might have been omitted by an oversight in transcription in those of Origen and Epiphanius. Only Athanasius (in his *epist. fest.*), Amphilochius (in the *Jambi ad Seleuc.*), and the author of the *Synopsis Athanasius*, who is, supposed not to have lived till the tenth century, reckon it among the apocryphal books; while Junilius (of the sixth century) remarks that there were many in his days who doubted the canonicity of the book of Esther. From this it is sufficiently obvious, that these doubts were not founded upon historical tradition, but proceeded only from subjective reasons, and were entertained because offence was taken, first at the non-mention of the name of God in this book, and then at the confessedly apocryphal additions mingled with this book in the Alexandrinian translation. The author of the *Synopsis Ath.*, moreover, expressly says that the Hebrews regarded this book as canonical. The well-known harsh judgments of Luther in his work *de servo ar-*

bitrio: liber Esther, quamvis hunc habent in canone, dignior omnibus, me judice, qui extra canonem haberetur, and in his *Table Talk*, are purely subjective.[1] Luther could never reconcile himself to this book, because he felt that the saving truths of Scripture were absent from it. The later Jews, on the contrary, exalted it even far above the Thorah and the prophets.[2]

Later Protestant theologians, too, have, in their efforts to justify the canonicity of this book, over-estimated its canonical value, and attributed to the history therein related, Messianic references which are foreign to its meaning (comp. the verdict given upon it in Carpzov's *Introd. in V. T.* p. 369 sq.). The moderate opinion of Brentius is: *hic liber utilis est ad docendam fidem et timorem Dei, ut pii non frangantur adversis, sed invocantes nomen Domini ex fide, accipiant spem salutis; impii vero alieno supplicio terreantur et ad pietatem convertantur.* This opinion is one far better founded than the depreciatory decision of modern critics, that this book breathes a spirit of revenge and pride (de Wette-Schrader); or of Bertheau, that "Esther and Mordochai are full of a spirit of revenge and hostility not to Gentile ways, but to the Gentiles themselves, of cruelty, and of ungodly confidence in a victory over the world, by worldly power and the employment of worldly means," and that this book "belongs to the historical records of the revelation made to Israel, only in so far as it helps to fill up the chasm between the times of the prophets and the days of our Lord." "The book itself and its position in the canon plainly testify, that the people to whom the victory over the world was promised, separated themselves farther and farther from communion with the holy God, trusted to their own arm and to worldly power, and could not, therefore, but be worsted in their contest

[1] "And while the Doctor was correcting the second book of Maccabees he said: I am so hostile to this book and that of Esther, that I wish they did not exist; they are too Judaizing, and contain many heathenish improprieties."

[2] Comp. the collection of rabbinical eulogies of this book in Aug. Pfeiffer, *thes. herm.* p. 597 sq., and in Carpzov's *introd.* i. p. 366.

with the empire of the times." Such a verdict is justified neither by the circumstance, that the Jews, who reject Christ's redemption, understand and over-estimate this book in a carnal manner, nor by the fact, that the name of God does not once occur therein. With respect to the first point, the book itself is not to blame for being misused by Jews who have not accepted the redemption which is by Christ, to nourish a fanatical hatred of all Gentiles. Even if Esther and Mordochai were filled with a spirit of revenge toward the Gentiles, no reproach could in consequence be cast on the book of Esther, which neither praises nor recommends their actions or behaviour, but simply relates what took place without blame or approval. But neither are the accusations raised against Esther and Mordochai founded in truth. The means they took for the deliverance and preservation of their people were in accordance with the circumstances stated. For if the edict promulgated by Haman, and commanding the extermination of the Jews, could not, according to the prevailing law of the Medo-Persians, be repealed, there was no other means left to Mordochai for the preservation of his countrymen from the destruction that threatened them, than the issue of a counter-edict permitting the Jews to fight for their lives against all enemies who should attack them, and conceding to them the same rights against their foes as had been granted to the latter against the Jews by the edict of Haman. The bloodshed which might and must ensue would be the fault neither of Mordochai nor Esther, but of Haman alone. And though Mordochai had irritated the haughty Haman by refusing him adoration, yet no Jew who was faithful to the commands of his God could render to a man that honour and adoration which are due to the Lord only. Besides, even if the offence of which he was thereby guilty against Haman might have incited the latter to punish him individually, it could offer no excuse for the massacre of the entire Jewish nation. As for the second point, viz. the non-mention of the name of God in this book, we have already remarked, § 3, that this omission is not caused by a lack of devoutness or reverence, the narrative itself

presenting features which lead to an opposite conclusion. In the answer which Mordochai sends to Esther's objection to appear before the king unbidden, "If thou holdest thy peace, there shall arise help and deliverance for the Jews from another place," is expressed the assured belief that God would not leave the Jews to perish. To this must be added, both that the Jews express their deep sorrow at the edict of Haman by fasting and lamentation (iv. 1–3), and that Queen Esther not only prepares for her difficult task of appearing before the king by fasting herself, but also begs to be assisted by the fasting of all the Jews in Susa (iv. 16). Now fasting was a penitential exercise, and the only form of common worship practised by Jews dwelling among Gentiles; and this penitential exercise was always combined with prayer even among the heathen (comp. Jon. iii. 5 sq.), though prayer and calling upon God might not be expressly mentioned. Finally, the occasion of this conflict between Jews and Gentiles was a religious one, viz. the refusal of adoration to a man, from fear of transgressing the first commandment. All these things considered, we may with Stähelin appropriate what Lutz in his *bibl. Hermeneutik*, p. 386, says concerning this book: "A careful survey will suffice to show, that the religious principle predominates in the book of Esther, and that there is a religious foundation to the view taken of the occurrence. For it is represented as providential, as an occurrence in which, although the name of God is unmentioned, a higher Power, a Power on the side of Israel, prevails. Even in single features a closer inspection will plainly recognise a religious tone of feeling, while the whole book is pervaded by religious moral earnestness." It is this religious foundation which has obtained and secured its position in the canon of the inspired books of the O. T. The book is a memorial of the preservation of the Jewish people, during their subjection to a universal empire, by means of a special and providential disposition of secular events, and forms in this respect a supplement to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which relate the restoration of the Jewish community to the land of their fathers.

On the additions to the book of Esther in the Alexandrinian version, which Luther, after the example of Jerome, excluded from the book and relegated to the Apocrypha under the title of *Stücke in Esther*, comp. my *Lehrb. der Einleitung*, § 237, and O. F. Fritzsche's *kurzgef. exeget. Hdb. zu den Apokryphen des N. T.* p. 68 sq.

For the exegetic literature, see *Lehrb. der Einl.* v. § 150. Comp. also E. Ph. L. Calmberg, *liber Esteræ interpretatione latina brevique commentario illustr.*, Hamb. 1837, 4, and Bertheau's Commentary, quoted p. 18.

EXPOSITION.

CHAP. I.—THE BANQUET OF KING AHASHVEROSH AND THE DIVORCE OF QUEEN VASHTI.

AHASHVEROSH, king of Persia, gave, in the third year of his reign, a banquet to the grandees of his kingdom then assembled in Susa, for the purpose of showing them the greatness and glory of his kingdom; while the queen at the same time made a feast for the women in the royal palace (vers. 1–9). On the seventh day of the feast, the king, "when his heart was merry with wine," sent a message by his chief courtiers to the queen, commanding her to appear before him, to show the people and the princes her beauty, and on her refusal to come, was greatly incensed against her (vers. 10–12). Upon inquiring of his astrologers and princes what ought in justice to be done to the queen on account of this disobedience, they advised him to divorce Vashti by an irrevocable decree, and to give her dignity to another and better; also to publish this decree throughout the whole kingdom (vers. 13–20). This advice pleasing the king, it was acted upon accordingly (vers. 21 and 22).

Vers. 1–8. The banquet. Vers. 1–3 mark a period. עָשָׂה מִשְׁתֶּה, which belongs to וַיְהִי, does not follow till ver. 3, and even then the statement concerning the feast is again interrupted by a long parenthesis, and not taken up again and completed till ver. 5. On the use of וַיְהִי in historical narratives at the beginning of relations having, as in the present instance and Ruth i. 1, no reference to a preceding narrative,

see the remark on Josh. i. 1. Even when no express reference to any preceding occurrence takes place, the historian still puts what he has to relate in connection with other historical occurrences by an "and it came to pass." Ahashverosh is, as has already been remarked on Ezra iv. (p. 73), Xerxes, the son of Darius Hystaspis. Not only does the name אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ point to the Old-Persian name Ksʿayarsʿa (with א prosthetic), but the statements also concerning the extent of the kingdom (chap. i. 1, x. 1), the manners and customs of the country and court, the capricious and tyrannical character of Ahashverosh, and the historical allusions are suitable only and completely to Xerxes, so that, after the discussions of Justi in Eichhorn's *Repert.* xv. pp. 3–38, and Baumgarten, *de fide*, etc., pp. 122–151, no further doubt on the subject can exist. As an historical background to the occurrences to be delineated, the wide extent of the kingdom ruled by the monarch just named is next described: "He is that Ahashverosh who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces." מִהֹדּוּ וְעַד כּוּשׁ . . . שֶׁבַע is not an accusative dependent on מֹלֵךְ, he ruled 127 provinces, for מָלַךְ, to reign, is construed with עַל or בְּ, but is annexed in the form of a free apposition to the statement: "from India to Cush;" as also in chap. viii. 9. הֹדוּ is in the Old-Persian cuneiform inscriptions, Hidhu; in Zend, Hendu; in Sanscrit, Sindhu, *i.e.* dwellers on the Indus, for Sindhu means in Sanscrit the river Indus; comp. Rœdiger in Gesenius, *Thes.* Append. p. 83, and Lassen, *Indische Alterthumsk.* i. p. 2. כּוּשׁ is Ethiopia. This was the extent of the Persian empire under Xerxes. Mardonius in Herod. vii. 9 names not only the Sakers and Assyrians, but also the Indians and Ethiopians as nations subject to Xerxes. Comp. also Herod. vii. 97, 98, and viii. 65, 69, where the Ethiopians and Indians are reckoned among the races who paid tribute to the Persian king and fought in the army of Xerxes. The 127 מְדִינוֹת, provinces, are governmental districts, presided over, according to chap. viii. 9, by satraps, pechahs, and rulers. This statement recalls that made in Dan. vi. 2, that Darius the Mede set over his kingdom 120 satraps. We have already shown

in our remarks on Dan. vi. 2 that this form of administration is not in opposition to the statement of Herod. iii. 89 sq., that Darius Hystaspis divided the kingdom for the purpose of taxation into twenty *ἀρχαί* which were called *σατραπηΐαι*. The satrapies into which Darius divided the kingdom generally comprised several provinces. The first satrapy, *e.g.*, included Mysia and Lydia, together with the southern part of Phrygia; the fourth, Syria and Phœnicia, with the island of Cyprus. The Jewish historians, on the other hand, designate a small portion of this fourth satrapy, viz. the region occupied by the Jewish community (Judah and Benjamin, with their chief city Jerusalem), as מְדִינָה, Ezra ii. 1, Neh. i. 3, vii. 6, xi. 3. Consequently the satrapies of Darius mentioned in Herodotus differ from the *medinoth* of Dan. vi. 2, and Esth. i. 1, viii. 9. The 127 medinoth are a division of the kingdom into geographical regions, according to the races inhabiting the different provinces; the list of satrapies in Herodotus, on the contrary, is a classification of the nations and provinces subject to the empire, determined by the tribute imposed on them.—Ver. 2. The words: in those days, take up the chronological statement of ver. 1, and add thereto the new particular: when King Ahashverosh sat on the throne of his kingdom in the citadel of Ṣusa. שֶׁבֶת does not involve the notion of quiet and peaceable possession after the termination of wars (Clericus, Rambach), but that of being seated on the throne with royal authority. Thus the Persian kings are always represented upon a raised seat or throne, even on journeys and in battle. According to Herod. vii. 102, Xerxes watched the battle of Thermopylæ sitting upon his throne. And Plutarch (*Themistocl.* c. 13) says the same of the battle of Salamis. Further examples are given by Baumg. *l.c.* p. 85 sq. On the citadel of Susa, see Neh. i. 1, and remarks on Dan. viii. 2.—Ver. 3. "In the third year of his reign he made a feast to all his princes and his servants, when the forces of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, were before him." עָשָׂה מִשְׁתֶּה, to make, to prepare, *i.e.* to give, a feast; comp. Gen. xxi. 8. The princes and the servants are, all who were assembled about him in

Susa. These are specified in the words which follow as חֵיל פ׳. We might supply לְ before חֵיל from the preceding words, (viz.) the forces, etc.; but this would not suit the לִפְנֵיו at the end of the verse. For this word shows that an independent circumstantial clause begins with חֵיל, which is added to call attention to the great number of princes and servants assembled at Susa (Bertheau): the forces of Persia . . . were before him: when they were before him. By חֵיל, the host, the forces, Bertheau thinks the body-guard of the king, which, according to Herod. vii. 40, consisted of 2000 selected horsemen, 2000 lancers, and 10,000 infantry, is intended. There is, however, no adequate reason for limiting חֵיל to the body-guard. It cannot, indeed, be supposed that the whole military power of Persia and Media was with the king at Susa; but חֵיל without כֹּל can only signify an *élite* of the army, perhaps the captains and leaders as representing it, just as "the people" is frequently used for "the representatives of the people." The Persians and Medes are always named together as the two kindred races of the ruling nation. See Dan. vi. 9, who, however, as writing in the reign of Darius the Mede, places the Medes first and the Persians second, while the contrary order is observed here when the supremacy had been transferred to the Persians by Cyrus. On the form פָּרַס, see rem. on Ezra 1. i. After the mention of the forces, the *Partemim*, *i.e.* nobles, magnates (see on Dan. i. 3), and the princes of the provinces are named as the chief personages of the civil government.—Ver. 4. "When he showed the glorious riches of his kingdom and the excellent honour of his greatness many days, one hundred and eighty days." This verse has been understood by most expositors as stating that the king magnificently and splendidly entertained all the grandees mentioned in ver. 3 for a full half-year, and gave them a banquet which lasted 180 days. Clericus supposes proceedings to have been so arranged, that the *proceres omnium provinciarum* were not entertained at one and the same time, but *alii post alios*, because all could not be absent together *per sex menses a suis provinciis*. Bertheau, however, thinks that the historian did not purpose

to give an exact and graphic description of the proceeding, but only to excite astonishment, and that they who are astonished will not inquire as to the manner in which all took place. The text, however, does not say, that the feast lasted 180 days, and hence offers no occasion for such a view, which is founded on a mistaken comprehension of ver. 4, which combines בְּהַרְאֹתוֹ וגו׳ with עֲשָׂה מִשְׁתֶּה of ver. 3, while the whole of ver. 4 is but a further amplification of the circumstantial clause: when the forces, etc., were before him; the description of the banquet not following till ver. 5, where, however, it is joined to the concluding words of ver. 4: "when these (180) days were full, the king made a feast to all the people that were found in the citadel of Susa, from great to small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's house." This verse is thus explained by Bertheau: after the soldiers, nobles, and princes of the district had been entertained for six months, all the male inhabitants of Susa were also entertained in a precinct of the palace garden, the women being feasted by Vashti the queen in the palace (ver. 9). It is, however, obvious, even from ver. 11, which says that on the seventh day of this banquet the king commanded the queen to appear "to show the people and the princes her beauty," that such a view of the occurrence is inadmissible. For this command presupposes, that the people and princes were assembled at the king's banquet; while, according to the view of Bertheau and older expositors, who insist on two banquets, one lasting 180 days, the other seven, the latter was given to the male inhabitants of Susa only. The princes and people of the whole kingdom did not, however, dwell in Susa. These princes and people, to whom the queen was to show her beauty, are undoubtedly the princes and servants of the king, the forces of Persia and Media, and the nobles and princes of the provinces enumerated in ver. 3. With this agrees also the description of the guests invited to the seven days feast. כָּל־הָעָם הַנִּמְצְאִים בְּשׁוּשַׁן does not signify "all the inhabitants of Susa," but all then present, *i.e.* then assembled in the citadel of Susa. הַנִּמְצְאִים used of persons means, those who for some purpose are found or present in any

place, in distinction from its usual inhabitants; comp. 1 Chron. xxix. 17, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 32, Ezra viii. 25; and הָעָם does not here signify people in the sense of population, but people who are met in a certain place, and is used both here and Neh. xii. 38 of an assembly of nobles and princes. לְמִגָּדוֹל וְעַד קָטָן, moreover, does not mean old and young, but high and low, the greater and lesser servants (עֲבָדִים) of the king, and informs us that of those assembled at Susa, both princes and servants participated without exception in the banquet.—This view of 3–5 is confirmed by the consideration, that if the seven days banquet were a different one from that mentioned in ver. 3, there could be no reason for naming the latter, which would then be not only entirely unconnected with the narrative, but for which no object at all would be stated; for בְּהַרְאוֹתוֹ cannot be translated, as in the Vulgate, by *ut ostenderet*, because, as Bertheau justly remarks, ב cannot indicate a purpose. From all these reasons it is obvious, that the feast of which further particulars are given in 5–8 is the same מִשְׁתֶּה which the king, according to ver. 3, gave to his שָׂרִים and עֲבָדִים, and that the text, rightly understood, says nothing of two consecutive banquets. The sense of vers. 3–5 is accordingly as follows: King Ahasuerus gave to his nobles and princes, when he had assembled them before him, and showed them the glorious riches of his kingdom and the magnificence of his greatness for 180 days, after these 180 days, to all assembled before him in the fortress of Susa, a banquet which lasted seven days. The connection of the more particular description of this banquet, by means of the words: when these (the previously named 180) days were over, following upon the accessory clause, ver. 4, is anacoluthistic, and the anacoluthon has given rise to the misconception, by which ver. 5 is understood to speak of a second banquet differing from the מִשְׁתֶּה of ver. 3. The purpose for which the king assembled the grandees of his kingdom around him in Susa for a whole half-year is not stated, because this has no connection with the special design of the present book. If, however, we compare the statement of Herod. vii. 8, that Xerxes, after the re-subjection of Egypt, summoned the chief

men of his kingdom to Susa to take counsel with them concerning the campaign against Greece, it is obvious, that the assembly for 180 days in Susa, of the princes and nobles mentioned in the book of Esther, took place for the purpose of such consultation. When, too, we compare the statement of Herod. vii. 20, that Xerxes was four years preparing for this war, we receive also a corroboration of the particular mentioned in ver. 3, that he assembled his princes and nobles in the third year of his reign. In this view "the riches of his kingdom," etc., mentioned in ver. 4, must not be understood of the splendour and magnificence displayed in the entertainment of his guests, but referred to the greatness and resources of the realm, which Xerxes descanted on to his assembled magnates for the purpose of showing them the possibility of carrying into execution his contemplated campaign against Greece. The banquet given them after the 180 days of consultation, was held in the court of the garden of the royal palace. בִּיתָן is a later form of בַּיִת, which occurs only here and vii. 7, 8. חָצֵר, court, is the space in the park of the royal castle which was prepared for the banquet. The fittings and furniture of this place are described in ver. 6. "White stuff, variegated and purple hangings, fastened with cords of byssus and purple to silver rings and marble pillars; couches of gold and silver upon a pavement of malachite and marble, mother-of-pearl and tortoise-shell." The description consists of mere allusions to, or exclamations at, the splendour of the preparations. In the first half of the verse the hangings of the room, in the second, the couches for the guests, are noticed. חוּר from חָוַר means a white tissue of either linen or cotton. Bertheau supposes that the somewhat larger form of ח is intended to denote, even by the size of letter employed, the commencement of the description. כַּרְפַּס, occurring in Sanscrit, Persian, Armenian, and Arabic, in Greek *κάρπασος*, means originally cotton, in Greek, according to later authorities, a kind of fine flax, here undoubtedly a cotton texture of various colours. תְּכֵלֶת, deep blue, purple. The hangings of the space set apart were of these materials. Blue and white were, according to Curtius vi. 6. 4, the royal colours of the

Persians; comp. M. Duncker, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, ii. pp. 891 and 951 of the third edition, in which is described also the royal table, p. 952. The hangings were fastened (אָחַז) with cords of white byssus and purple to rings and pillars of white marble. מִטּוֹת, couches (divans) of gold and silver, *i.e.* covered with cloth woven of gold and silver thread, were prepared for the guests at the feast. These couches were placed upon a tesselated, mosaic-like floor; the tesselation being composed of stones of various colours. בַּהַט, in Arabic a mock stone, in LXX. *σμαραγδίτης*, a spurious emerald, *i.e.* a green-coloured stone resembling the emerald, probably malachite or serpentine. שֵׁשׁ is white marble; דַּר, Arabic دُرّ, pearl, LXX. *πίννινος λίθος*, a pearl-like stone, perhaps mother-of-pearl. סֹחֶרֶת, a kind of dark-coloured stone (from שָׁחַר = סָחַר, to be dark), black, black marble with shield-like spots (all three words occur only here).—Ver. 7. The entertainment: "And drinks poured into vessels of gold! and vessels differing from vessels, and royal wine in abundance, according to the hand of a king. (Ver. 8) And the drinking was according to law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house to do according to every one's pleasure." הַשְׁקוֹת, inf. Hiph., to give to drink, to hand drinks, is used substantively. The golden drinking vessels were of various kinds, and each differing in form from another. Great variety in drinking vessels pertained to the luxury of Persians; comp. Xenoph. *Cyrop.* viii. 8, 18. יֵין מַלְכוּת is wine from the royal cellar, therefore costly wine. Many interpreters understand it of the Chalybonian wine, which the Persian kings used to drink. See rem. on Ezek. xxvii. 18. כְּיַד הַמֶּלֶךְ, according to the hand of the king, *i.e.* according to royal bounty; comp. 1 Kings x. 13. The words: "the drinking was according to law, none did compel," are generally understood to say, that the king abolished for this banquet, the prevailing custom of pledging his guests. According to Grecian information (see Baumgarten, p. 12 sq.), an exceedingly large quantity of wine was drunk at Persian banquets. This sense of the words is not, however, quite

certain. The argument of Baumgarten, *Si hic mos vulgaris fuisset in epulis regiis, sine dubio hæc omnia non commemorata essent,* no more holds good than his further remark: *formulam illam* כְּדָת אֵין אֹנֵס *non puto adhibitam fuisse, nisi jam altera contraria* כְּדָת אֹנֵס *solemnis esset facta.* The historian can have noticed this only because it was different from the Jewish custom. Bertheau also justly remarks: "We are not told in the present passage, that the king, on this occasion, exceptionally permitted moderation, especially to such of his guests as were, according to their ancestral customs, addicted to moderation, and who would else have been compelled to drink immoderately. For the words with which this verse concludes, while they imply also a permission to each to drink as little as he chose, are specially intended to allow every one to take much. יִפֹּד עַל, to appoint concerning, *i.e.* to enjoin, comp. 1 Chron. ix. 22. רַב בַּיִת, those over the house, *i.e.* the court officials.

Vers. 9–12. Vashti the queen also gave a banquet to the women in the royal house (palace) which belonged to King Ahashverosh, probably in the royal apartments of the palace, which were placed at her disposal for this great feast to be given to the women. The name Vashti may be compared with the Old-Persian *vahista, i.e. optimus.* In Persian وشتی means a beautiful woman. This statement serves as an introduction to the scene which follows. Vers. 10 and 11. On the seventh, *i.e.* the last day of the banquet, when the king's heart was merry with wine, he commanded his seven chamberlains to bring Vashti the queen before him, with the royal crown, to show her beauty to the people and princes. כְּטוֹב לֵב וגו׳, when the heart of the king was merry through wine, *i.e.* when the wine had made him merry, comp. 2 Sam. xiii. 28, Jud. xvi. 25. It was the office of the seven eunuchs who served before the king (מְשָׁרֵת אֶת־פָּנָיו like 1 Sam. ii. 18) to be the means of communication between him and the women, and to deliver to them messages on the part of the monarch. Their number, seven, was connected with that of the Amshaspands; see rem. on ver. 14. The attempts made

to explain their several names are without adequate foundation; nor would much be gained thereby, the names being of no significance with respect to the matter in question. In the LXX. the names vary to some extent. The queen was to appear with the crown on her head (כֶּתֶר, *κίδαρις* or *κίταρις*, a high turban terminating in a point), and, as is self-evident, otherwise royally apparelled. The queen was accustomed on ordinary occasions to take her meals at the king's table; comp. Herod. ix. 110. There is, however, an absence of historical proof, that she was present at great banquets. The notice quoted from Lucian in Brissonius, *de regio Pers. princ.* i. c. 103, is not sufficient for the purpose.—Ver. 12. The queen refused to appear at the king's command as delivered by the eunuchs, because she did not choose to stake her dignity as a queen and a wife before his inebriated guests. The audacity of Persians in such a condition is evident from the history related Herod. v. 18.

Vers. 13–15. The king, greatly incensed at this disobedience to his behest, inquired of his wise men what was to be done to Queen Vashti according to law. These wise men are ver. 13 designated as those "who knew the times," *i.e.* astrologers and magi, who give counsel according to celestial phenomena; comp. the wise men of Babylon, Dan. ii. 27, v. 15; Isa. xliv. 25, xlvii. 13; Jer. l. 35. Of these he inquires, "for thus was the business of the king conducted before all that knew law and judgment." דָּבָר here does not signify word or speech, but matter, business; and the meaning of this parenthetical sentence is, that in every matter, the king, before deciding, applied to those who were skilled in law and judgment to hear their opinions concerning it. With this is joined a second explanatory parenthetical sentence, ver. 14: "And those next him were Carshena, etc., the seven princes of the Persians and Medes, who behold the king's countenance, who hold the first seat in his kingdom." הַקְּרֹבִים is indefinite, and may be understood as expressing the plural. It is perhaps questionable how this clause should be combined with what precedes, whether with כָּל־יוֹדְעֵי דָת וְדִין, before all that knew law and judgment and those next him,

or with לַחֲכָמִים, ver. 13: he spoke to the wise men . . . and those next him. In any case the sense is, that the seven princes of the Persians and Medes were also numbered either among the wise men who knew the times, or those who were skilled in the law. These seven princes are the seven king's counsellors of Ezra vii. 14, and by their number of seven form a counterpart to the seven Amshaspands. They who see the face of the king, *i.e.* are allowed direct intercourse with him. Herod. iii. 84 relates of the seven princes who conspired the overthrow of the pretended Smerdis, that they resolved, that it should be permitted them to present themselves unannounced before the future king. Hence many expositors identify these seven princes with the authorities called the seven counsellors, but without sufficient grounds. The number seven frequently recurs,—comp. the seven eunuchs, ver. 5, the seven maidens who waited on Esther, ii. 9,—and refers in the present case to the seven Amshaspands, in others to the days of the week, or the seven planets. הַיֹּשְׁבִים רִאשֹׁנָה, who sit first, *i.e.* in the highest place, *i.e.* constitute the highest authority in the realm. What the king said (ver. 13) does not follow till ver. 15: "According to law, what is to be done to Queen Vashti, because she has not done the word of the king," *i.e.* not obeyed his command by the eunuchs? כְּדָת, according to law, legally, is placed first because it is intended emphatically to assert that the proceeding is to be in conformity with the law. עָשָׂה with בְּ, to inflict something on any one.

Vers. 16–20. The counsel of the wise men. Ver. 16. Memucan, who was the last mentioned in ver. 14, comes forward as spokesman for the rest, and declares before the king and the princes, *i.e.* in a solemn assembly, and evidently as the result of a previous joint consultation: Vashti the queen has not done wrong to the king alone, but also to all the princes and all the people, because the example of the queen will lead all the Median and Persian wives to despise their husbands. Therefore an irrevocable edict is to be published decreeing the divorce of Queen Vashti, and this law published throughout the whole realm, that all . . . may

show honour to their husbands. Vashti has not transgressed against the king alone (ver. 16), but against all the princes and people in all the provinces of King Ahashverosh (ver. 16.) In what respect, then, is the latter assertion true? We are told vers. 17 and 18. "For the deed of the queen will come abroad to (עַל for אֶל) all women, to bring their husbands into contempt in their eyes (the *infin.* לְהָבְזוֹת stating the result), while they will say," etc. (the suffix of בְּאָמְרָם relates to the women, who will appeal to the disobedience of the queen). Ver. 18. "And this day (*i.e.* already) the princesses of the Persians and Medians, who hear of the act of the queen (דְּבַר, not the word, but the thing, *i.e.* her rejection of her husband's command), will tell it to all the princes of the king, and (there will be) enough contempt and provocation. קֶצֶף is an outburst of anger; here, therefore, a provocation to wrath. Bertheau makes the words וּכְדֵי בז׳ וק׳ the object of תֹּאמַרְנָה, which, after the long parenthesis, is united to the copula by ו, and for, "to speak contempt and wrath," reads: to speak contemptuously in wrath. But this change cannot be substantiated. The expression, to speak wrath, is indeed unexampled, but that is no reason for making קֶצֶף stand for בְּקֶצֶף, the very adoption of such an ellipsis showing, that this explanation is inadmissible. The words must be taken alone, as an independent clause, which may be readily completed by יִהְיֶה: and contempt and wrath will be according to abundance. כְּדֵי is a litotes for: more than enough. The object of תֹּאמַרְנָה must be supplied from the context: it—that is, what the queen said to her husband. In the former verse Memucan was speaking of all women; here (ver. 18) he speaks only of the princesses of the Persians and Medes, because these are staying in the neighbourhood of the court, and will immediately hear of the matter, and "after the manner of the court ladies and associates of a queen will quickly follow, and appeal to her example" (Berth.).—Ver. 19. After this argument on the queen's conduct, follows the proposal: "If it please the king (טוֹב עַל like Neh. ii. 5), let there go from him a word of the kingdom (*i.e.* a royal edict), and let it be written (entered) in the laws of the Persians and the Medes,

and not pass away, that Vashti come no more before King Ahashverosh; and let the king give her queenship (her royal rank) to another who is better than she." An edict issued by the king, entered among the laws of the Persians and Medes, and sealed with the royal signet (viii. 8), does not pass away, *i.e.* remains in force, is irrevocable (comp. Dan. vi. 9). The counsellors press for the issue of such an edict, for the purpose of making it impossible to the king to take Vashti again into favour, lest they should experience her vengeance on the restoration of her influence. רֵעוּתָהּ, her companion, is any other woman, Vashti being here regarded merely as a woman. הַטּוֹבָה includes both beauty and good behaviour (Berth.). By this means, add the counsellors in ver. 20, all the ill effects of Vashti's contumacy will be obviated. "And when the king's decree, which he shall make, is heard in his whole kingdom, for it is great, all wives shall give honour to their husbands, from great to small." פִּתְגָם is according to the *Keri* to be pointed as the constructive state, פִּתְגַם. The expression פִּתְגָם עֲשָׂה is explained by the circumstance, that פתגם signifies not only edict, decree, but also thing (see on Dan. iii. 16): to do a thing. In the present verse also it might be so understood: when the thing is heard which the king will do in his whole kingdom. The parenthetical clause, for it is great, is intended to flatter the king's vanity, and induce an inclination to agree to the proposal. "From great to small" signifies high and low, old and young.

Vers. 21 and 22. The saying pleased the king and the princes, and the king carried it into execution. He sent letters into all his provinces to make known his commands, and to let all husbands know, that they were to bear rule in their own houses. "In every province according to its writing, and to every people according to their speech" (comp. viii. 9), that his will might be clearly understood by all the subjects of his wide domain, who spoke different languages and used different alphabetical characters. The contents of these letters follow in לִהְיוֹת וגו', that every man should be master in his own house. These words state only the chief matter and object of the edict; but they presuppose that

the fact which gave rise to the decree, viz. the refusal of Vashti, and her consequent deposition, were also mentioned. The last words: "and that he shall speak according to the language of his people," are obscure. Older expositors understand them to mean, that every man was to speak only his native language in his house, so that in case he had a foreign wife, or several who spoke other languages, they might be obliged to learn his language, and to use that alone. Bertheau, on the other hand, objects that such a sense is but imported into the words, and in no wise harmonizes with the context. Both these assertions are, however, unfounded. In the words, the man shall speak according to the language of his people, *i.e.* he shall speak his native tongue in his house, it is implied that no other language was to be used in the house, and the application of this law to foreign wives is obvious from the context. The rule of the husband in the house was to be shown by the fact, that only the native tongue of the head of the house was to be used in the family. Thus in a Jewish family the Ashdodite or any other language of the wife's native land could not have been used, as we find to have been the case in Judæa (Neh. xiii. 23). All other explanations are untenable, as has been already shown by Baumgarten, p. 20; and the conjecture set up after Hitzig by Bertheau, that instead of כִּלְשׁוֹן עַמּוֹ we should read כָּל־שָׁוֶה עַמּוֹ, every one shall speak what becomes him, gives not only a trivial, and not at all an appropriate thought, but is refuted even by the fact that not שָׁוֶה עִם, but only שָׁוֶה לְ (comp. iii. 8) could bear the meaning: to be becoming to any one. Such a command may, indeed, appear strange to us; but the additional particular, that every man was to speak his native tongue, and to have it alone spoken, in his own house, is not so strange as the fact itself that an edict should be issued commanding that the husband should be master in the house, especially in the East, where the wife is so accustomed to regard the husband as lord and master. Xerxes was, however, the author of many strange facts besides this.

CHAP. II.—ELEVATION OF ESTHER TO THE THRONE. SERVICE RENDERED BY MORDOCHAI TO THE KING.

When the wrath of King Ahashverosh was appeased, and he remembered his harsh treatment of Vashti, his courtiers proposed that he should send to fetch fair young virgins from all parts of his realm to the house of the women in Susa, that he might choose a new queen from among them. This proposal pleasing the king, was acted upon (vers. 1–4). In the fortress of Susa, however, there dwelt one of the Jews who had been carried into captivity from Jerusalem, and whose name was Mordochai. This man had brought up Esther, his uncle's daughter, as his own child (vers. 5–7). When, then, in pursuance with the king's commands, many maidens were gathered together in Susa, Esther also was brought into the king's house, and found favour with the keeper of the women while, according to order, she was going through a course of purification and anointing (vers. 8–14). When her turn came to be brought before the king, she found favour in his sight above all the other maidens, and was chosen by him to be queen in the place of Vashti. By Mordochai's command, however, she disclosed her race and lineage to no one (vers. 15–20). At the same time two courtiers conspired against the life of the sovereign. Their conspiracy being discovered by Mordochai, was by him revealed to Esther, who gave information of it to the king, whereupon the matter was investigated, and found to have been correctly stated. The offenders were punished, and the event duly registered in the chronicles of the kingdom.

Vers. 1–4. When, after these things, the wrath of King Ahashverosh was laid (שָׁכַךְ, from שָׁכַךְ, to be sunk, spoken of wrath to be laid), he remembered Vashti and what she had done, and what was decreed against her (גָּזַר, to determine, to decree irrevocably; comp. גְּזֵרָה, Dan. iv. 14); a desire for reunion with her evidently making itself felt, accompanied perhaps by the thought that she might have been too harshly treated. To prevent, then, a return of affection for his rejected wife ensuing,—a circumstance which might greatly

endanger all who had concurred in effecting her repudiation,—the servants of the king, *i.e.* the court officials who were about him, said: "Let there be young maidens, virgins fair to look on, sought for the king." בְּתוּלוֹת, virgins, is added to נְעָרוֹת, the latter word signifying merely young women of marriageable age. Ver. 3. "And let the king appoint (וְיַפְקֵד is the continuation of יְבַקְּשׁוּ) officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together every virgin who is fair to look on to the citadel of Susa, to the house of the women, unto the hand of Hega the king's eunuch, the keeper of the women, and let them appoint their things for purification; and let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti." To the hand of Hega, *i.e.* to his care and superintendence, under which, as appears from ver. 12, every maiden received into the house of the women had to pass a year before she was brought before the king. Hega (called Hegai, vers. 8 and 15) was an eunuch, the keeper of the women, *i.e.* superintendent of the royal harem. וְנָתוֹן is the *infin. abs.*, used instead of the *verb. fin.* to give prominence to the matter: let them appoint. תַּמְרוּקִים, from מָרַק, to rub, to polish, signifies purification and adornment with all kind of precious ointments; comp. ver. 12. This speech pleased the king, and he acted accordingly.

Vers. 5–7. Before relating how this matter was carried into execution, the historian introduces us to the two persons who play the chief parts in the following narrative. Ver. 5. There was (dwelt) in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the name of Mordochai (מָרְדְּכַי, in more correct editions מָרְדֳּכַי), the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite (אִישׁ יְמִינִי like 1 Sam. ix. 1). Jair, Shimei, and Kish can hardly mean the father, grandfather, and great-grandfather of Mordochai. On the contrary, if Jair were perhaps his father, Shimei and Kish may have been the names of renowned ancestors. Shimei was probably the son of Gera, well known to us from the history of David, 2 Sam. xvi. 5 sq. and 1 Kings ii. 8, 36 sq., and Kish the father of Saul, 1 Chron. viii. 33, 1 Sam. ix. 1; for in

genealogical series only a few noted names are generally given; comp., *e.g.*, 1 Chron. ix. 19, vi. 24 sq. Upon the ground of this explanation, Josephus (*Ant.* xi. 6) makes Esther of royal descent, viz. of the line of Saul, king of Israel; and the Targum regards Shimei as the Benjamite who cursed David. The name Mordochai occurs in Ezra ii. 2 and Neh. vii. 7 as that of some other individual among those who returned from captivity with Zerubbabel, but can hardly be connected with the Persian مردکی, little man. Aben Ezra, Lightfoot, and others, indeed, are of opinion that the Mordochai of the present book really came up with Zerubbabel, but subsequently returned to Babylon. Identity of name is not, however, a sufficient proof of identity of person. The chronological statement, ver. 6: who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been carried away with Jeconiah, king of Judah, etc., offers some difficulty. For from the captivity of Jeconiah in the year 599 to the beginning of the reign of Xerxes (in the year 486) is a period of 113 years; hence, if the אֲשֶׁר is referred to Mordochai, he would, even if carried into captivity as a child by then, have reached the age of from 120 to 130 years, and as Esther was not made queen till the seventh year of Xerxes (ii. 16), would have become prime minister of that monarch at *about* the age of 125. Rambach, indeed, does not find this age incredible, though we cannot regard it as probable that Mordochai should have become minister at so advanced an age.[1] On this account Clericus, Baumgarten, and others refer the relative אֲשֶׁר to the last name, Kish, and understand that he was carried away with Jeconiah, while his great-grandson Mordochai was born in captivity. In this case Kish and Shimei must be regarded as the great-grandfather and grandfather of Mordochai. We grant the possibility of this view; nevertheless it is more

[1] Baumg. aptly remarks, *l.c.*, p. 125: *Etsi concedendum est, non esse contra naturam, si Mordechæus ad illam ætatem pervenerit, et summa hac constitutus senectute gravissimis negotiis perficiendis par fuerit, tamen est hoc rarissimum et nisi accedit certum testimonium, difficile ad credendum.*

in accordance with the Hebrew narrative style to refer אֲשֶׁר to the chief person of the sentence preceding it, viz. Mordochai, who also continues to be spoken of in ver. 7. Hence we prefer this reference, without, however, attributing to Mordochai more than 120 years of age. For the relative clause: who had been carried away, need not be so strictly understood as to assert that Mordochai himself was carried away; but the object being to give merely his origin and lineage, and not his history, it involves only the notion that he belonged to those Jews who were carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar with Jeconiah, so that he, though born in captivity, was carried to Babylon in the persons of his forefathers. This view of the passage corresponds with that formerly presented by the list of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Jacob who went down with him to Egypt; see the explanation of the passage in question.[1] Ver. 7. Mordochai was אֹמֵן, keeper, bringer up, *i.e.* foster-father, to Hadassah (אֹמֵן constructed as a participle with אֶת). הֲדַסָּה means a myrtle (הֲדַס in the Shemitish), like the Greek name *Μυρτία*, *Μυρρίνη*. "That is Esther," the queen known by the name of Esther. The name אֶסְתֵּר is the Old-Persian *stara* with א prosthetic, and corresponds with the Greek *ἀστήρ*, star, in modern Persian *sitareh*. She was בַּת־דֹּדוֹ, daughter of his father's brother, and adopted by Mordochai after the death of her parents; we are told, moreover, that she had a fine figure and beautiful countenance. Her father, whose name, according to ver. 15, was Abihail, was uncle to Mordochai, and hence Esther was his cousin.

Vers. 8–11. When, then, the king's commandment and decree was heard, *i.e.* proclaimed throughout the kingdom, and many maidens gathered together in Susa, Esther also

[1] Baumgarten also considers this view admissible, rightly remarking, p: 127: *Scriptoribus sacris admodum familiare est singulos homines non per se et sepositos spectare, sed familias et gentes ut corpora quasi individua complecti, ita ut posteri majorum personis quasi contenti et inclusi, majores vero in posteris ipsi subsistere et vivere existimentur. Ex hac ratione Mordechæus captus esse dici potest, quamvis ipse satis diu post Jechoniæ tempora ex iis, qui a Nebucadnezaro abducti sunt, natus fuerit.*

was received into the royal harem, under the keeping of Hegai. The maiden pleased him and won his favour (נָשָׂא חֶסֶד, to bear away love, *i.e.* to obtain favour, synonymous with נָשָׂא חֵן, ver. 15 and chap. v. 2). וַיְבַהֵל וגו׳, and he hastened to give her her ointments for purification, and the seven maidens appointed to her from the king's house. The infinitives לָתֵת לָהּ are, according to the Aramæan idiom, placed after their objects and dependent on יְבַהֵל. On תַּמְרוּקִים, see on ver. 3. מָנוֹת, portions, are here portions of food, as in chap. ix. 19, 22, and 1 Sam. i. 4. The seven maidens (הַנַּעֲרוֹת with the article) are the maids appointed to wait upon a young virgin selected for the king. The participle רְאִיוֹת: chosen for a particular purpose,—in the Talmud and rabbinical Hebrew רָאוּי, *dignus, decens, conveniens*,—occurs only here. וַיְשַׁנֶּהָ, he changed her and her maids into the best of the house of the women, *i.e.* he took them out of the ordinary rooms and placed them in the best apartments, probably in the state-rooms, where those who were accustomed to be brought to the king used to dwell.—Ver. 10 contains a supplementary remark. This kind and respectful treatment was shown to Esther, because, in obedience to Mordochai's command, she had not shown her people nor her kindred, *i.e.* her Jewish extraction; for a Jewish maiden would hardly have experienced such friendly usage. Ver. 11 also contains an additional notice, prefixed here to enable what follows to be rightly understood, and repeated in another connection ver. 19, and on several other occasions: Mordochai walked every day before the court or enclosure of the women's house, to know the welfare (שְׁלוֹם) of Esther and what became of her (יֵעָשֶׂה בָּהּ, properly, what was done to her). Hence Mordochai was in constant communication with Esther. How this communication was effected is not more particularly stated; probably by means of the maids appointed to wait on her. Jewish expositors are of opinion, that Mordochai held high office, and that having consequently free access to the royal palace, he could easily find the means of communicating with his relative.

Vers. 12–18. Before relating the appearance of Esther

before the king, the narrator more particularly describes in vers. 12–14 the preparations for this event, and how Esther behaved with respect to them.—Vers. 12 and 13. "When every maid's turn came (*i.e.* at every time that any maid's turn came) to go in to King Ahashverosh, after the time when it had been done to her twelve months according to the law of the women—for thus were the days of their purification accomplished: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with balsam and ointments of purification for women—and the maiden came to the king, all that she desired was given her to go with her out of the women's house unto the king's house." תּוֹר, turn in succession, used only here and ver. 15. The turn to go in unto the king did not come to any maid until מִקֵּץ הֱיוֹת וגו׳, at the end of the time when it had been done to her according to the law. . . . This time lasted twelve months after her reception into the house of the women; and the law of the women, according to which it was done to her, was, that she should be purified for six months with oil of myrrh, and as long with בְּשָׂמִים, sweet odours and other ointments. וְזֶה הַנַּעֲרָה בָּאָה (ver. 13) forms the continuation of the antecedent clause commencing with בְּהַגִּיעַ, or, to speak more correctly, of a second antecedent with which the conclusion אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר is connected. Some expositors understand בָּזֶה, with the LXX., of the time: *illo sc. tempore;* others of the condition: *hoc modo ornata* or *ea lege* (Cler.), and therefore as parallel in meaning with the כֵּן of chap. iv. 16. Either view is admissible and suits the sense, but the latter is more in harmony with the parallel passage chap. iv. 16, and therefore preferable. All that was to be given her, can only relate to ornaments and jewels, which were to be given that each might appear before the king adorned and dressed after her own taste.—Ver. 14. In the evening she went (to the king), and on the morrow she returned to the women's house, a second (time) to the hand (under the keeping of) Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, who kept the concubines; she came no more to the king, except the king delighted in her and she were called by name, *i.e.* specially. שֵׁנִי instead of שֵׁנִית, like Neh. iii. 30.—

Ver. 15. When Esther's turn came to go in unto the king, she required nothing (to take with her, see ver. 13) but what Hegai the king's chamberlain appointed (hence was not concerned to please the king by special adornment), and she obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her, namely, by her modesty and humility. On חֵן נָשָׂא, see remarks on ver. 9.—Ver. 16. She was taken into the king's house (בֵּית מַלְכוּת instead of בֵּית הַמַּלְכָּה, the palace of the kingdom, the royal residence) in the tenth month, *i.e.* the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.—Ver. 17. And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; and he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. The meaning evidently is, that the king, immediately after their first meeting, bestowed his affections upon Esther in preference to all the women and maidens, and chose her queen.—Ver. 18. To celebrate Esther's elevation to the crown, the king made a great feast, called Esther's feast, to all his princes and servants, and granted release to the provinces. The *verbale Hiph.* הַנָּחָה is translated in the LXX. ἄφεσις, Vulg. *requies*, and understood either of a remission of taxes or a remission of labour, a holiday. Although the Chald. understands it of a remission of taxes, yet the use of the verb עָשָׂה rather favours the latter meaning, viz. the appointment of a holiday, on which there would be a resting from labour. Finally, he gave gifts with royal munificence מַשְׂאֵת like Amos v. 11, Jer. xl. 5; בְּיַד הַמֶּלֶךְ like chap. i. 7.—It seems strange that a period of four years should intervene between the repudiation of Vashti in the third year of Ahashverosh and the elevation of Esther in the seventh, an interval whose length cannot be adequately accounted for by the statements of the present book. Only a few days could have elapsed between the disgrace of Vashti and the time when the king remembered her; for this took place, we are told, when the king's wrath was appeased. The proposal to collect virgins from all parts of his kingdom to Susa was then immediately made. Now, if the carrying out of this proposal took half a year, and the preparation of the virgins

by anointing, etc, lasted a year, Esther, even if her turn to go in unto the king had not come for six months, might have been made queen two years after the repudiation of Vashti. As she obtained the favour of Hegai immediately upon her reception into the women's house, so that he hastened her purifications (ver. 9), she would not be brought before the king among the last, but would rather be one of the first to go in. The long interval which elapsed between the repudiation of Vashti and the elevation of Esther, can only be satisfactorily explained by the history of the reign of Xerxes; in fact, by the circumstance that his campaign against Greece took place during this time.

Vers. 19–23 relate the intervention of an incident of great importance in the subsequent development of the narrative. When virgins were for the second time gathered together, two courtiers were incensed with the king, and sought to lay hands upon him. This thing was known to Mordochai, who sat in the gate of the palace and kept up a constant communication with Esther even after she became queen, and by him communicated to her, that she might bring it to the knowledge of the king. The matter being investigated and found to have been truly reported, the offenders were punished, and an entry of the particulars made in the chronicles of the kingdom. The words "when virgins were assembled for the second time," which serve to define the time when the conspiracy of the two courtiers took place, as is obvious from the circumstance that בְּהִקָּבֵץ בת׳, ver. 19, are obscure. The obscurity lies in the fact that no reason for assembling virgins can be perceived, after the choice of Ahashverosh had fallen upon Esther. The sentence וּבְהִקָּבֵץ בְּתוּלוֹת שֵׁנִית unmistakeably corresponds with וּבְהִקָּבֵץ נְעָרוֹת of ver. 8. This was already rightly perceived by Grotius, who, however, wrongly infers: *est ἐπάνοδος (retrogressio), referendum enim hoc ad illa quæ supra*, ii. 2. This is, however, not only incompatible with שֵׁנִית, but also with the circumstance that, according to the correct understanding of the sentences in vers. 21 and 22, Esther was then already queen, and Mordochai was sitting in the gate of the king's

palace, and thence keeping up communication with her; while as long as Esther was in the women's house preparing for her interview with the king, under the guardianship of Hegai, he walked day by day before the court of the women's house (ver. 11). Still less admissible is the view of Drusius, received by Bertheau, that the gathering of the virgins for the second time is to be understood from the circumstance, that after going in to the king, they had to go into the second house of the women, under the stricter guardianship of Shaashgaz (ver. 14). For, being no longer בְּתוּלוֹת, but פִּילַגְשִׁים (ver. 14), their reception into the house of the concubines could not be called a second gathering together, since as virgins they were formerly in a different house. The only explanation of the שֵׁנִית left us is the view, that even after the choice of Esther to be queen, a second gathering together of virgins actually took place; for this, as C. a Lapide remarks, is what the words undoubtedly declare. The matter itself was in accordance with the prevailing custom of polygamy, which kings carried to such an extent, that, as C. a Lapide points out, Solomon, *e.g.*, had 700 wives and 300 concubines, *i.e. secondarias uxores*. From וּמָרְדֳּכַי, ver. 19, onwards, explanatory circumstantial clauses follow: "Then Mordochai sat in the king's gate" introduces the parenthetical sentence, "Esther had not yet showed her kindred and her people (comp. ver. 10), as Mordochai had charged her; for Esther did the commandment of Mordochai as when she was under his care;" *i.e.* Esther obeyed, after her elevation to be queen, the command of Mordochai not to make her Jewish descent known, as she had formerly done while she was yet his foster-daughter. אֹמְנָה, care, education, is a substantive derived from אָמַן.—Ver. 21. The definition of time in ver. 19 is again taken up by the words: in those days; then the explanatory clause, ver. 20, is repeated; and after this we are informed what it was that had then occurred. In those days Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's courtiers, who were the threshold-keepers (palace-watchers, LXX. *ἀρχισωματοφύλακες*), were wroth, and sought to lay hands on King Ahashverosh, *i.e.* to slay him. Ver. 22. This thing was

known to Mordochai, and by him communicated to Esther, who told it, in Mordochai's name, to the king. Ver. 23. The matter was investigated (*sc.* by the king), and found out, *sc.* as Mordochai had testified. The two criminals were hanged on a tree, *i.e.* impaled on a stake, a sort of crucifixion,—see rem. on chap. vi. 11,—and the circumstance entered in the book of the chronicles, *i.e.* the chronicles of the kingdom. לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, before the king, *i.e.* in his presence, immediately after sentence had been passed by a court over which the monarch presided.

CHAP. III.—HAMAN'S ELEVATION AND HIS DESIGN AGAINST THE JEWS.

King Ahashverosh promoted Haman the Agagite above all the princes about him, and commanded all his servants to fall down before him. This mark of reverence was refused by Mordochai the Jew from religious scruples. When intelligence of this was brought to Haman, he sought to obtain the extermination of the Jews throughout the kingdom (1–6). The twelfth month was appointed by the casting of lots for this purpose; and Haman, by exciting the suspicion of the king against the Jews as an exclusive and law-opposing people, obtained from him an edict to this effect (7–11), and sent it, by letters sealed with the king's seal, by the hand of messengers into all the provinces of the kingdom in the first month, that they might be ready to carry it into execution in the twelfth month; whereat the city of Susa was much perplexed (12–15).

Vers. 1–6. The elevation of Haman above all the princes of the kingdom is said in a general manner to have taken place "after these things," *i.e.* after the matters related in chap. ii. גִּדֵּל, to make great, to make any one a great man; נִשָּׂא, elevated, is more precisely defined by the sentence following: he set his seat above all the princes that were with him, *i.e.* above the seat of all the princes about the king; in fact, advanced him to the highest post, made him his grand vizier. Haman is called the son of Hammedatha הָאֲגָגִי, the Agagite, or of the Agagites. אֲגָגִי recalls אֲגַג king of the Amalekites,

conquered and taken prisoner by Saul, and hewn in pieces by Samuel, 1 Sam. xv. 8, 33. Hence Jewish and Christian expositors regard Haman as a descendant of the Amalekite king. This is certainly possible, though it can by no means be proved. The name Agag is not sufficient for the purpose, as many individuals might at different times have borne the name אֲגָג, *i.e.* the fiery. In 1 Sam. xv., too, Agag is not the *nomen propr.* of the conquered king, but a general *nomen dignitatis* of the kings of Amalek, as Pharaoh and Abimelech were of the kings of Egypt and Gerar. See on Num. xxiv. 7. We know nothing of Haman and his father beyond what is said in this book, and all attempts to explain the names are uncertain and beside the mark.—Ver. 2. All the king's servants that were in the gate of the king, *i.e.* all the court officials, were to kneel before Haman and bow themselves to the earth. So had the king commanded concerning him. This mark of reverence was refused by Mordochai.—Vers. 3 and 4. When the other officials of the court asked him from day to day, why he transgressed the king's commandment, and he hearkened not unto them, *i.e.* gave no heed to their words, they told it to Haman, "to see whether Mordochai's words would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew." It is obvious from this, that Mordochai had declared to those who asked him the reason why he did not fall down before Haman, that he could not do so because he was a Jew,—that as a Jew he could not show that honour to man which was due to God alone. Now the custom of falling down to the earth before an exalted personage, and especially before a king, was customary among Israelites; comp. 2 Sam. xiv. 4, xviii. 28, 1 Kings i. 16. If, then, Mordochai refused to pay this honour to Haman, the reason of such refusal must be sought in the notions which the Persians were wont to combine with the action, *i.e.* in the circumstance that they regarded it as an act of homage performed to a king as a divine being, an incarnation of Oromasdes. This is testified by classical writers; comp. Plutarch, *Themist.* 27; Curtius, viii. 5. 5 sq., where the latter informs us that Alexander the Great imitated this custom on his march to India, and remarks, § 11:

Persas quidem non pie solum, sed etiam prudenter reges suos inter Deos colere; majestatem enim imperii salutis esse tutelam. Hence also the Spartans refused, as Herod. vii. 136 relates, to fall down before King Xerxes, because it was not the custom of Greeks to honour mortals after this fashion. This homage, then, which was regarded as an act of reverence and worship to a god, was by the command of the king to be paid to Haman, as his representative, by the office-bearers of his court; and this Mordochai could not do without a denial of his religious faith.—Ver. 5. When, then, Haman, whose attention had been called to the fact, saw, when next he went in unto the king, that Mordochai did not fall down before him, he was full of wrath, and (ver. 6) thought scorn, *i.e.* in his pride esteemed it too contemptible, to lay hands on Mordochai alone, *i.e.* to execute him alone, for this opposition to the royal commands; for they had showed him the people of Mordochai, *i.e.* had told him that as a Jew Mordochai had refused this act of worship, and that the whole Jewish nation thought and acted accordingly. Therefore he sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahashverosh, the people of Mordochai. The subject Haman is repeated before וַיְבַקֵּשׁ for the sake of clearness, because it was not expressly named with וַיָּבֹא. עַם מָרְדֳּכַי is in apposition to כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים: all the Jews as the people of Mordochai, because they were the people of Mordochai and shared his sentiments.

Vers. 7–11. To ensure the success of this great undertaking, viz. the extermination of all the Jews in the kingdom, Haman had recourse to the lot, that he might thus fix on a propitious day for the execution of his project. Astrology plays an important part among all ancient nations, nothing of any magnitude being undertaken without first consulting its professors concerning a favourable time and opportunity; comp. rem. on Ezek. xxi. 26.—Ver. 7. "In the first month, *i.e.* Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahashverosh, they cast Pur, *i.e.* the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to the twelfth month, *i.e.* the month Adar." The subject of הִפִּיל is left indefinite, because it is self-evident that

this was done by some astrologer or magician who was versed in such matters. Bertheau tries unnaturally to make Haman the subject, and to combine the subsequent לִפְנֵי הָמָן with הִפִּיל הַנּוֹרָל: "Haman cast Pur, *i.e.* the lot, before Haman," which makes Pur signify: the lot before Haman. לִפְנֵי הָמָן means in the presence of Haman, so that he also might see how the lot fell. פּוּר is an Old-Persian word meaning lot (*sors*); in modern Persian بار, *bâra*, signifies time, case (*fois, cas*), پارہ, *pâra* or *pâre*, piece (*morceau, pièce*), and بهر, *behr, behre*, and بهره, *behre*, lot, share, fate; comp. Zenker, *Turco-Arabic and Persian Lexicon*, pp. 162 and 229. The words "from day to day, from month to the twelfth month," must not be understood to say, that lots were cast day by day and month by month till the twelfth; but that in the first month lots were at once cast, one after the other, for all the days and months of the year, that a favourable day might be obtained. We do not know the manner in which this was done, "the way of casting lots being unknown to us." The words: from month to the twelfth month, are remarkable; we should expect from month to month till the twelfth month. Bertheau supposes that the words לְחֹדֶשׁ וַיִּפֹּל הַנּוֹרָל עַל יוֹם שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר were omitted after וּמֵחֹדֶשׁ through the eye of the transcriber passing on from the first לְחֹדֶשׁ to the second. The text of the LXX. actually contains such words, and the possibility of such an oversight on the part of a transcriber must certainly be admitted. In the book of Esther, however, the LXX. translation is no critical authority, and it is just as possible that the author of the Hebrew book here expresses himself briefly and indefinitely, because he was now only concerned to state the month determined by lot for the undertaking, and intended to mention the day subsequently. —Ver. 8. Haman having by means of the lot fixed upon a favourable day for the execution of the massacre, betook himself to the king to obtain a royal decree for the purpose. He represented to the monarch: "There is a people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom, and their laws are different from all other

people (*i.e.* from the laws of all other people), and they keep not the laws of the king, and it is not fitting for the king to leave them alone. Ver. 9. If it seem good to the king, let it be written (*i.e.* let a written decree be published) to destroy them; and I will weigh ten thousand talents of silver to those who do the business, that they may bring them into the treasuries of the king." This proposal was very subtilly calculated. First Haman casts suspicion on the Jews as a nation scattered abroad and dwelling apart, and therefore unsociable,—as refractory, and therefore dangerous to the state; then he promises the king that their extermination will bring into the royal treasury a very considerable sum of money, viz. the property of the slaughtered. Ten thousand talents of silver, reckoned according to the Mosaic shekel, are £3,750,000, according to the civil shekel £1,875,000; see rem. on 1 Chron. xxii. 14. עֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה, those who execute a work, builders in 2 Kings xii. 12, are here and ch. ix. 3 the king's men of business, who carry on the king's business with respect to receipts and disbursements, the royal financiers.—Ver. 10. The king agreed to this proposal. He drew his signet ring from his hand, and delivered it to Haman, that he might prepare the edict in the king's name, and give it by the impression of the royal seal the authority of an irrevocable decree; see rem. on viii. 8. "To the enemy of the Jews" is added emphatically.—Ver. 11. Lest it should appear as though the king had been induced by the prospect held out of obtaining a sum of money, he awards this to Haman. "The silver be given to thee, and the people to do to them (let it be done to them) as seemeth good to thee." וְהָעָם precedes absolutely: as for the people of the Jews, etc.

Vers. 12–15. Haman, without delay, causes the necessary writings to be prepared, and sent into all the provinces of the kingdom. Ver. 12. "Then were called the king's scribes in the first month, on the thirteenth day of it (בּוֹ, in it, in the said month); and there was written according to all that Haman commanded, to the satraps of the king, and to the governors who (were placed) over every province, and to the rulers of every people, to each several province accord-

ing to its writing, and to each different people according to their language (comp. rem. on i. 22); in the name of King Ahashverosh was it written, and sealed with the king's seal." אֲחַשְׁדַּרְפְּנִים and פַּחוֹת placed in juxtaposition, as in Ezra viii. 36, are the imperial officials. Beside these are also named the שָׂרִים of every people, the native princes of the different races. The writing was finished on the thirteenth day of the month, because this day of the month had been fixed upon as propitious by the lot.—Ver. 13. And the letters were sent (נִשְׁלוֹחַ, *infin. abs. Niph.* instead of the *verb. fin.*) by posts. הָרָצִים are the post-riders, the aggaroi, who were stationed on the high roads of the realm, generally four parasangs apart, to transmit with the more speed the royal letters and messages. Herod. v. 14, viii. 98 (Berth.), comp. Brisson. *de reg. Pers. princ.* i. c. 238 sq. לְהַשְׁמִיד וגו', to destroy, to kill, and cause to perish all Jews from the youth to the old man, children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, and to deprive them of their spoil. The three verbs are combined to give strength to the expression. שְׁלָלָם is their property, which is called spoil because it was delivered up to plunder. Haman having held out the prospect of a large sum as the result of exterminating the Jews, and the king having bestowed this upon Haman, the plundering of the Jews, thus permitted to all the inhabitants of the kingdom who should assist in exterminating them, must be understood as implying, that they would have to deliver a portion of the booty thus obtained to Haman.—Ver. 14. The copy of the writing, that the law might be given in every province, was opened to all people, that they might be ready by this day. This verse does not announce a copy of the royal decree that had been prepared and sent by the posts, which would in that case be replaced by a mere allusion to its contents (Bertheau). The words contain no trace of an announcement such as we find in Ezra iv. 11, vii. 11, but the historical notice, that the copy of the writing which was sent as a law into the provinces was נִגְלֵי, opened, *i.e.* sent unclosed or unsealed to all people. נִגְלֵי is the predicate to the subject פִּתְשֶׁגֶן וגו' (comp. on this word the note to Ezra

iv. 14), and between the subject and predicate is inserted the infinitive clause לְהִנָּתֵן דָּת וגו׳ for the purpose of once more briefly mentioning the contents and destination of the כְּתָב: that a law might be given in every province. To attain this object the more certainly, the copy of the decree, which was brought into every province by the posts, was open or unsealed, that all people might read its contents, and keep themselves in readiness for the execution of what was therein commanded on the appointed day. לַיּוֹם הַזֶּה is the thirteenth day of the twelfth month named in the letter.—Ver. 15. The posts went forth hastening (דְּחוּף like 2 Chron. xxvi. 20) at the king's commandment, and the decree was given (promulgated) in the citadel of Susa,—an explanatory clause; and the king and Haman sat down to drink while the messengers went forth with the decree, but the city of Susa, in which it was first published, was in perplexity (on נְבוֹכָה comp. Ex. xiv. 3, Joel i. 18). The cruel measure could not but fill all peace-loving citizens with horror and anxiety.—Here the question is forced upon us, why the decree should have been so prematurely published. The scribes were summoned to prepare it on the thirteenth day of the first month. For this purpose, even though many copies had to be made in different languages, no very long time would be required in a well-appointed government office. As soon as the scribes had finished their work, the decree was sent out by the posts into all quarters of the realm, and would arrive in even the most distant provinces in three weeks at furthest. This would place almost eleven, and in the remotest parts about ten months between the publication and execution of the decree. What then was the motive for such an interval? Certainly so long a time could not be required for preparing to carry it out, nor is this hinted at in the text, as Bertheau supposes. Nor could it be intended that the Jews should suffer a long period of anxiety. On the contrary, the motive seems to have been, as Clericus and others have already conjectured, to cause many Jews to leave their property and escape to other lands, for the sake of preserving their lives. Thus

Haman would attain his object. He would be relieved of the presence of the Jews, and be able to enrich himself by the appropriation of their possessions (comp. p. 307). On the other hand, the providence of God overruling the event in the interest of the Jews, is unmistakeably evident both in Haman's haste to satisfy his desire for vengeance, and in the falling of the lot upon so distant a day. It was only because there was so long an interval between the publication of the decree and the day appointed by lot for its execution, that it was possible for the Jews to take means for averting the destruction with which they were threatened, as the further development of the history will show.

CHAP. IV.—MORDOCHAI'S MOURNING ON ACCOUNT OF THE DECREE FOR THE ASSASSINATION OF THE JEWS, AND HIS ADMONITION TO ESTHER TO INTERCEDE FOR HER PEOPLE.

When Mordochai heard what had happened, he went mourning and lamenting about the city, and even to the king's gate; and the decree of Haman occasioned great lamentations among the Jews in all the provinces of the kingdom (1–3). When Queen Esther heard through her maids and courtiers of Mordochai's mourning, she sent him raiment that he might put off his mourning garb, but he refused to do so. She then sent an eunuch to him to inquire more particularly as to its cause. Mordochai informed him of all that had happened, giving him a copy of the decree to show to Esther, and charging her to entreat the king's favour for her people (4–8). The queen, however, expressed her hesitation to go in unto the king unsummoned, but upon Mordochai's repeated admonition, resolved to make the desired attempt, at the peril of her life (9–17).

Vers. 1–3. Mordochai learnt all that was done,—not only what had been openly proclaimed, but, as is shown by ver. 7, also the transaction between the king and Haman. Then he rent his garments, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, making loud and bitter lamenta-

tion. Comp., on the last words, Gen. xxvii. 34. The combination of אֵפֶר with יִלְבַּשׁ שַׂק is an abbreviation for: put on a hairy garment and spread ashes upon his head, in sign of deep grief; comp. Dan. ix. 3, Job ii. 12, and elsewhere.—Ver. 2. And came even before the king's gate, *i.e.*, according to ver. 6, the open space before the entrance to the royal palace; for none might enter wearing mourning. אֵין לָבוֹא, there is no entering, *i.e.* none may enter; comp. Ewald, § 321, *c.*—Ver. 3. Also in every province whither the king's decree arrived, there arose a great mourning among the Jews. מָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר is an adverbial *accusat. loci* in apposition to בְּכָל־מְדִינָה: in every place to which the word of the king and his decree reached, *i.e.* arrived. "Sackcloth and ashes were spread for many," *i.e.* many sat in hairy garments upon the earth, where ashes had been spread; comp. Isa. lviii. 5. The meaning is: All the Jews broke out into mourning, weeping, and lamentation, while many manifested their grief in the manner above described.

Vers. 4–8. The matter was made known to Esther by her maids and eunuchs, *i.e.* by her attendants. The *Chethiv* תִּבוֹאֶינָה does not elsewhere occur after ו consecutive, hence the substitution of the *Keri* תָּבוֹאנָה. The object of וַיַּגִּידוּ: what they told her, is evidently, from what follows, the circumstance of Mordochai's appearance in deep mourning before the gate of the palace. On receiving this information the queen fell into convulsive grief (תִּתְחַלְחַל, an intensive form of חוּל, to be seized with painful grief), and sent to Mordochai raiment to put on instead of his sackcloth, evidently for the purpose of enabling him to enter the palace and give her the particulars of what had happened. But Mordochai did not accept the raiment.—Vers. 5–7. Then Esther sent Hatach, one of the eunuchs whom the king had set before her, *i.e.* appointed to attend her, to Mordochai to learn "what this, and why this," *i.e.* what was the meaning and the cause of his thus going about in mourning. When Hatach came forth to him in the open place of the city before the king's gate, Mordochai told him all that had happened, and the amount of the money which Haman had promised to weigh to the king's treasures

(*i.e.* to pay into the royal treasury) for the Jews, to destroy them, *i.e.* that it might be permitted him to destroy the Jews. פְּרָשָׁה, properly a determined, accurate statement, from פָּרַשׁ in the sense of to determine clearly (see rem. on Lev. xxiv. 12); here, according to the context: amount, sum. This promise of Haman is here emphatically mentioned as the chief point, not so much for the purpose of raising the indignation of Esther to the highest pitch (Bertheau), as to show the resentment and eagerness with which Haman had urged the extermination of the Jews. The *Chethiv* יְהוּדִיִּם is the rarer form for יְהוּדִים, and is repeated viii. 1, 7, 13, ix. 15, 18.—Ver. 8. Mordochai also gave Hatach a copy of the decree published in Susa (נָתַן בְּשׁוּשָׁן, like iii. 15) to show it to the queen. The וּלְהַגִּיד לָהּ following is more correctly drawn towards the subsequent וְלָצַוּוֹת, as by Bertheau, than connected according to the accentuation with what precedes. Before this infinitive must be supplied from the context, especially from ver. 7: and Mordochai commissioned him or told him (Hatach): to declare unto her and to command her (Esther) to go in unto the king, to entreat him and to make request before him for her people. בַּקֵּשׁ עַל, to beg, to make request for something, like Ezra viii. 23, and chap. vii. 7. עַל עַמָּהּ, concerning her people, *i.e.* in this connection: for them.

Vers. 9–17. When Hatach brought this information to Esther, she sent word by him to Mordochai, that she might not go in unto the king unsummoned. תְּצַוֶּהוּ אֶל מ', she ordered or commissioned him to Mordochai, viz. to tell him what follows, ver. 11: "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces (*i.e.* all the officers and subjects of the king) know, that with respect to every man or woman that shall come in unto the king, into the inner court, that is not called—one (the same) law (is) for him: to put (him) to death, except him to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live." כָּל-אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה precede as *nominativi absol.*; these are followed by two relative clauses, which are succeeded by the anacoluthic predicate דָּתוֹ אַחַת: one and the same law is for him (דָּתוֹ, the law concerning him, the unsummoned appearer, the matter of which is briefly stated by

לְהָמִית). In the inner court dwelt the king, seated on his throne (comp. v. 1). The law, that every one entering unbidden should be put to death, was subject to but one exception: לְבַד מֵאֲשֶׁר וגו', except him to whom the king stretches out, etc. הוֹשִׁיט from יָשַׁט, appearing only in the present book (v. 2, viii. 4), but frequently in Chaldee and Syriac, signifies to hold out, to extend, with לוֹ, to or towards him. שַׁרְבִּיט, the Aramaic form for שֵׁבֶט, sceptre. Access to the royal presence had been already rendered difficult by an edict issued by Dejokes the Mede, Herod. i. 9; and among the Persians, none, with the exception of a few individuals (Herod. iii. 118), were permitted to approach the king without being previously announced (Herod. iii. 140; Corn. Nepos, *Conon*, 3). Any one entering unannounced was punished with death, unless the king, according to this passage, gave it to be understood by stretching forth his sceptre that he was to remain unpunished. It is, however, self-evident, and the fact is confirmed by Herod. iii. 140, that any who desired audience were allowed to announce themselves. Esther might, it seems, have done this. Why, then, did she not make the attempt? The answer lies in her further message to Mordochai: "and I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days." From these words it appears, that formerly she had been more frequently summoned before the king. Now, however, a whole month had passed without any invitation. Hence she concluded that the king did not much wish to see her, and for this reason dared not go unto him unbidden. Evidently, too, she was unwilling to be announced, because in that case she would have been obliged immediately to make known to the king the cause of her desiring this interview. And this she would not venture to do, fearing that, considering the great favour in which Haman stood with the king, she might, if she did not provoke his displeasure against herself through her intercession for her people, at least meet with a rejection of her petition. To set aside an irrevocable decree sealed with the king's seal, must have appeared to Esther an impossible undertaking. To have asked such a thing of the king would

have been indeed a bold venture.—Vers. 12–14. When what Esther said was reported to Mordochai, he sent word back to her (הָשִׁיב): "Think not in thy soul (with thyself) to be saved in the house of the king above all the Jews; for if thou holdest thy peace at this time, recovery and deliverance will arise from another place, but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. And who knows if thou hast attained to royalty for a time such as this!" By the words: "Think not that thou wilt be saved in the king's house above all the Jew," *i.e.* alone of all the Jews, Mordochai does not reproach Esther with being indifferent to the fate of her fellow-countrymen, but rather calls her attention to the fact that her own life is in danger. This is evident from the clause: if thou hold thy peace, will not intercede with the king for thy people, help will come from some other quarter. רֶוַח = רְוָחָה, Ex. viii. 11, *ἀναψύξις*, deliverance from oppressive restraint. יַעֲמוֹד, rise up, arise, used according to later custom for קוּם, as in 1 Chron. xx. 4. The thought is: the Jewish nation cannot perish, its continuance is guaranteed by the divine promise. If thou wilt venture nothing for its safety, God will bring deliverance, but destruction will come upon thee and thy family. Though Mordochai neither speaks of God, nor alludes directly to His assistance, he still grounds his hopes of the preservation of his people upon the word and promise of God, and Brentius pertinently remarks: *habes hic excellentem ac plane heroicam Mardochæi fidem, qua in præsentissimo ac periculosissimo discrimine videt futuram liberationem.* The last clause of ver. 14 is by most expositors understood as saying: and who knows whether thou hast not for a time like this attained to royalty? This agrees with the sense, but cannot be verbally justified, for אִם does not mean whether not. The sentence contains an aposiopesis. The clause depending on the conditional אִם is unspoken, but understood. Besides, הִגַּעְתְּ is not in the imperfect. Hence it can only be translated: Who knows, if thou hadst not attain to royalty at or for such a time? Then the clause omitted would be: what thou then wouldst have done. מִי יוֹדֵעַ more frequently has the meaning of *perhaps;* and Mordochai says:

perhaps thou hast attained to royalty (to the dignity of queen) for a time like this, *sc.* to use thy position for the deliverance of thy people. In the turn thus given to the sentence it contains the most urgent injunction to Esther to use her high position for the preservation of her fellow-countrymen.—Ver. 15. This pressing monition produced its result. Esther returned answer to Mordochai: "Go, gather together all the Jews that are found in Susa, and fast ye for me: I also and my maidens will fast; and so will I go to the king against the law; and if I perish, I perish." Esther resolves to go to the king unsummoned, but begs Mordochai and all the Jews to unite in a three days' fast, during which she and her maidens will also fast, to seek by earnest humiliation God's gracious assistance in the step she proposes to take, for the purpose of averting the threatened destruction of her people. "Though 'God' and 'prayer' are not here mentioned, it is yet obviously assumed that it was before God that the Jews were to humble themselves, to seek His help, and to induce Him to grant it. 1 Kings xxi. 27–29; Joel i. 14; Jonah iii. 5 sq." (Berth.). To designate the strictness of this fasting, the words: "neither eat nor drink," are added. The "three days, night and day," are not to be reckoned as three times twenty-four hours, but to be understood of a fast which lasts till the third day after that on which it begins; for according to v. 1, Esther goes to the king on the third day. Comp. the similar definition of time, Jonah ii. 1. The addition "day and night" declares that the fast was not to be intermitted. וְכֵן, and in thus, *i.e.* in this state of fasting. אֲשֶׁר לֹא כַדָּת: which is not according to law. אֲשֶׁר לֹא is used, like the Aramæan form דִּי לָא, in the sense of *without* (comp. Ewald, § 222, *c*): without according to law = contrary to law. The last words: "if I perish, I perish," etc., are the expression not of despair, but of resignation, or perfect submission to the providence of God; comp. Gen. xliii. 14.—Ver. 17. And Mordochai went his way, *i.e.* from the place before the court of the king, to do what the queen had commanded him to do.

CHAP. V.—ESTHER'S GRACIOUS RECEPTION BY THE KING. HAMAN'S RAGE AGAINST MORDOCHAI.

On the third day Esther betook herself in her royal apparel to the inner court of the palace, and was so kindly received by the king, that he promised to grant her any petition she might make; whereupon she requested the king to come with Haman that day to a banquet which she had prepared (vers. 1–8). On returning from this banquet, Haman saw Mordochai in the king's gate, and when the latter did not bow before him, was so enraged, that, upon the advice of his wife and friends, he resolved to induce the king to permit the execution of Mordochai on the following day (vers. 9–14).

Vers. 1–8. On the third day Esther put on her royal apparel and entered the inner court of the king's house, opposite the dwelling of the king, where he was sitting on his throne before the gate (ver. 1). The third day must be counted from the day of the transaction between the queen and Mordochai (iv. 14); the first day being that on which it took place. The fasting, then, would not begin till midday; and on the third day Esther went to the king to invite him on that day to a banquet, which would surely take place in the forenoon. Thus the three days' fast would last from the afternoon of the first to the forenoon of the third day, *i.e.* from 40 to 45 hours. תִּלְבַּשׁ מַלְכוּת, she put on royalty, royal dignity, *i.e.* arrayed herself in royal apparel. Bertheau thinks that the word לִבּוּשׁ has been inadvertently omitted before מַלְכוּת; but such a conjecture is without sufficient support, the passages vi. 8 and viii. 15 being of another kind. The expression is elliptical, and מַלְכוּת is easily completed by the notion לִבּוּשׁ furnished by the verb.—Ver. 2. When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she obtained favour in his eyes (see rem. on ii. 9), and he held out to her the golden sceptre that was in his hand; and Esther drew near and touched the top of the sceptre, probably kissed it, as the *Vulgate* renders the word.—Ver. 3. The king, concluding from the circumstance of her appearing

there unsummoned, that she had some urgent matter to bring before him, said to her: "What wilt thou, Queen Esther? and what is thy request? To the half of the kingdom it shall be granted thee." A short expression for: if thy request relates even to the half of the kingdom, it shall be granted. Ver. 4. Esther, however, for the present requested nothing further, than that on that day (to-day) the king and Haman should come to the banquet she had prepared. אִם טוֹב עַל like i. 19. —Ver. 5. The king commanded Haman to hasten thither, to do as the queen had said. מַהֲרוּ, hastened Haman, *i.e.* sent to fetch him quickly. מַהֵר like 2 Chron. xviii. 8, 1 Kings xxii. 9. לַעֲשׂוֹת, that the word of the queen might be done, carried out. —Ver. 6. At the repast, and indeed at "the banquet of wine," when the greatest cheerfulness would prevail, the king repeated his question as to the desire of the queen, making the same promise as in ver. 3. וְתֵעָשׂ, an abbreviated form of the imperfect תֵּעָשֶׂה, is optative or jussive: and it shall be done.— Vers. 7 and 8. Esther answered: "My petition and my request—if I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition and to do my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and to-morrow I will do as the king hath said," *i.e.* make known my request. Though the king had, in the midst of the gaiety, asked what was Esther's request, she did not esteem the time an appropriate one for expressing it. She begins: my petition and my request,—but then stops, and says only, if the king will do her the favour to come with Haman to a banquet again on the morrow, she will then bring forward her petition. Esther invited Haman with the king on both occasions, that, as Calovius remarks, *eum apud regem præsentem accusaret decreti surrepti contra suos populares nomine, et in os omnes cavillandi vias ei præcluderet.*

Vers. 9–14. Haman went forth from the palace satisfied and with a joyful heart. When, however, he saw Mordochai in the king's gate, who neither stood up nor trembled before him, he was full of indignation against him. וְלֹא קָם וגו׳ are circumstantial clauses following the principal clause without a copula. קָם and זָע are perfects, and וְלֹא—וְלֹא are used in

the sense of *neque—neque.* זוּעַ constructed with מִן means to tremble before any one, to be disquieted.—Ver. 10. Haman, however, refrained himself; and without immediately giving vent to his rage at Mordochai, went home and sent for his friends and his wife Zeresh, that he might unburden himself before them, and take counsel with them for Mordochai's destruction.—Ver. 11. He first spoke to them of his wealth and domestic happiness, of the "glory of his riches and the multitude of his children." From ix. 7–10 we learn that Haman had ten sons; and many sons were not looked upon as a great blessing from God by the Israelites only, but were also esteemed a signal prosperity among the Persians, the king annually sending presents to him who had the greatest number of sons.[1] Haman next recounted to them the great honours he had attained; אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר, all how the king had made him great, and how he had advanced him above the princes; comp. iii. 1. אֲשֶׁר is a second accusative of the means by which something is brought to pass. Finally, ver. 12, what high distinction had just been accorded him, by the queen having invited him alone to come to her banquet with the king. "Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet which she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I also invited unto her with the king." אַף enhances the meaning: even this honour is shown me. אֲנִי קְרוּאַ־לָהּ, I am her invited guest = I am invited to her and by her; comp. Ew. § 295, *c.*—Ver. 13. And yet all his good fortune is embittered to him as often as he sees the hated Jew Mordochai. "And all this availeth me not at every time when I see the Jew Mordochai sitting in the king's gate." שֹׁוֶה לִי is, not being equalled to me, *i.e.* not answering my desires, not affording me satisfaction. בְּכָל־עֵת אֲשֶׁר, at all time when = as often as. The fortune and honour he enjoys fail to satisfy him, when he sees the Jew Mordochai refuse to show him the reverence which he claims.—

[1] Herod. says, i. 136: Ἀνδραγαθίη δ' αὕτη ἀποδέδεκται, μετὰ τὸ μάχεσθαι εἶναι ἀγαθόν, ὃς ἂν πολλοὺς ἀποδέξῃ παῖδας· τῷ δὲ τοὺς πλείστους ἀποδεικνύντι, δῶρα ἐκπέμπει ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος. Comp. Strabo, xv. 3. 17.

Ver. 14. His wife and all his friends advise: "Let a tree be made (set up) fifty cubits high, and to-morrow speak to the king, that Mordochai may be hanged thereon (*i.e.* impaled; see on תָּלָה ii. 23); and then go in merrily with the king to the banquet." The counsellors take it for granted that the king will without hesitation agree to Haman's proposal to execute Mordochai, and therefore advise him at once to make the necessary preparations, so that the hated Jew may be hanged on the morrow before the banquet, and Haman may then go with the king to the feast prepared by the queen, free from all annoyance. עֲשֵׂה עֵץ גב', to make, *i.e.* to erect a high tree. The higher the stake, the farther would it be seen. The 3d pers. plu. יַעֲשׂוּ stands instead of the passive: let them make = let . . be made. So too יִתְלוּ for let . . be hanged. This speech pleased Haman, and he caused the stake to be erected.

CHAP. VI.—ELEVATION OF MORDOCHAI AND DISGRACE OF HAMAN.

The next night the king, being unable to sleep, caused the chronicles of the kingdom to be read to him. The account of the conspiracy discovered by Mordochai, which was written therein, was thus brought before him, and he inquired of his servants whether this man had been rewarded (vers. 1–3*a*). On receiving a negative answer, the king sent to inquire who was in the court; and Haman being found there thus early, he had him summoned, and asked him: what should be done to the man in whose honour the king delighteth. Haman, supposing that the king could intend to honour no one but himself, voted for the very highest public mark of respect (vers. 3*b*–9), and was then obliged at the king's command to pay the proposed honour to Mordochai (vers. 10, 11). From this humiliation his wife and friends prognosticated his speedy downfall (vers. 12–14).

Vers. 1–11. An unexpected turn of affairs. Ver. 1. On that night between Esther's first and second banquet, the king's sleep fled, and he commanded to bring the book of records of

the chronicles and to read therefrom. On סֵפֶר הַזִּכְרֹנוֹת, comp. Ezra iv. 15. The title is here more particularly stated than in ii. 23, where the book is briefly called: The book of the chronicles. וַיִּהְיוּ נִקְרָאִים, and they (the chronicles) were read before the king. The participle denotes the long continuance of this reading.—Ver. 2. And it was found written therein among other matters, that Mordochai had given information concerning the two courtiers who were plotting against the king's life. This is the conspiracy related ii. 21–23. The name Bigthana is in ii. 21 written Bigthan.—Ver. 3. On this occasion the king asked: What honour and greatness hath been done to Mordochai for this? עַל־זֶה, for giving this information. And the king's servants answered: Nothing has been shown him. עָשָׂה עִם, to show any one something, *e.g.* favour; comp. 2 Sam. ii. 6, iii. 8, and elsewhere. גְּדוּלָּה, greatness, *i.e.* promotion to honour.—Ver. 4. To repair this deficiency, and to do honour to the man who had done good service to the king—as the Persian monarchs were accustomed, comp. Brisson. *de reg. Pers. princ.* i. c. 135—he asked, "who is in the court?" *i.e.* whether some minister or state functionary were there with whom he might consult concerning the honour due to Mordochai. Those who desired an audience with the king were accustomed to appear and wait in the outer court, until they were summoned into the inner court to present themselves before the monarch. From this question of the king it appears that it was already morning. And Haman, it is parenthetically remarked, was come into the outer court to speak to the king, to hang Mordochai on the tree which he had prepared.—Ver. 5. The attendants inform the king that Haman is in the court; whereupon the king commands: יָבוֹא, let him come in.—Ver. 6. As soon as he enters the king asks: What is to be done to the man in whose honour the king delighteth? *i.e.* whom he delights to honour. And Haman, thinking (אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ, to say in one's heart, *i.e.* to think) to whom will the king delight to show honour more than to me (יוֹתֵר מִמֶּנִּי, projecting before me, surpassing me, hence adverbially, beyond me, *e.g.* Eccles. xii. 12, comp. ii. 15, vii. 11, 16)? votes immediately for the greatest possible mark

of honour, and says, ver. 7 sq.: "As for the man in whose honour the king delighteth, let them bring the royal apparel with which the king has been clothed, and a horse on which the king has ridden, and the king's crown upon his head, and let them deliver this apparel and horse to one of the chief princes of the king, and let them array (*i.e.* with the royal apparel) the man in whose honour the king delighteth, and cause him to ride upon the horse through the streets of the city, and proclaim before him: Thus shall it be done to the man in whose honour the king delighteth." אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר וגו׳, ver. 7, precedes absolutely, and the predicate does not follow till וְהִלְבִּישׁוּ, ver. 9, where the preceding subject is now by an anacoluthon taken up in the accusative (אֶת־הָאִישׁ). Several clauses are inserted between, for the purpose of enumerating beforehand all that appertains to such a token of honour: a royal garment, a royal steed, a crown on the head, and one of the chief princes for the carrying out of the honour awarded. The royal garment is not only, as Bertheau justly remarks, such a one as the king is accustomed to wear, but, as is shown by the perf. לָבַשׁ, one which the king has himself already put on or worn. Hence it is not an ordinary state-robe, the so-called Median apparel which the king himself, the chief princes among the Persians, and those on whom the king bestowed such raiment were wont to appear in (Herod. iii. 84, vii. 116; Xenoph. *Cyrop.* viii. 3. 1, comp. with the note of Baehr on Her. iii. 84), but a costly garment, the property of the sovereign himself. This was the highest mark of honour that could be shown to a subject. So too was the riding upon a horse on which the king had ridden, and whose head was adorned with a royal crown. נִתַּן is perf. Niph., not 1st pers. pl. imperf. Kal, as Maurer insists; and אֲשֶׁר בְּרֹאשׁוֹ refers to the head of the horse, not to the head of the man to be honoured, as Clericus, Rambach, and most ancient expositors explain the words, in opposition to the natural sense of אֲשֶׁר נִתַּן בְּרֹאשׁוֹ. We do not indeed find among classical writers any testimony to such an adornment of the royal steed; but the circumstance is not at all improbable, and seems to be corroborated by ancient remains, certain Assyrian and ancient

Persian sculptures, representing the horses of the king, and apparently those of princes, with ornaments on their heads terminating in three points, which may be regarded as a kind of crown. The *infin. absol.* וְנָתוֹן is a continuation of the preceding jussive יָבִיאוּ: and they shall give, let them give the garment—to the hand of a man, *i.e.* hand or deliver to him. The garment and horse are to be delivered to one of the noblest princes, that he may bring them to the individual to be honoured, may array him in the garment, set him on the horse, and proclaim before him as he rides through the city, etc. On הַפַּרְתְּמִים, comp. i. 4, and on the matter itself, Gen. xl. 43. רְחוֹב is either an open square, the place of public assemblage, the forum, or a collective signifying the wide streets of the city. כָּכָה יֵעָשֶׂה as in Deut. xxv. 9 and elsewhere.—Vers. 10, 11. This honour, then, the haughty Haman was now compelled to pay to the hated Jew. The king commanded him: "Make haste, take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said," *i.e.* in the manner proposed by thee, "and do even so to Mordochai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate; let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken," *i.e.* carry out your proposal exactly. How the king knew that Mordochai was a Jew, and that he sat in the king's gate, is not indeed expressly stated, but may easily be supplied from the conversation of the king with his servants concerning Mordochai's discovery of the conspiracy, vers. 1–3. On this occasion the servants of the king would certainly give him particulars concerning Mordochai, who by daily frequenting the king's gate, ii. 19, v. 9, would certainly have attracted the attention of all the king's suite. Nor can doubt be cast upon the historical truth of the fact related in this verse by the question: whether the king had forgotten that all Jews were doomed to destruction, and that he had delivered them up to Haman for that purpose (J. D. Mich.). Such forgetfulness in the case of such a monarch as Xerxes cannot surprise us.

Vers. 12–14. After this honour had been paid him, Mordochai returned to the king's gate; but Haman hasted to his house, "sad and with his head covered," to relate to

his wife and friends all that had befallen him. A deeper mortification he could not have experienced than that of being obliged, by the king's command, publicly to show the highest honour to the very individual whose execution he was just about to propose to him. The covering of the head is a token of deep confusion and mourning; comp. Jer. xiv. 4, 2 Sam. xv. 30. Then his wise men, and Zeresh his wife, said to him: "If Mordochai, before whom thou hast begun to fall, be of the seed of the Jews, thou wilt not prevail against him, but wholly fall before him." לֹא תוּכַל לוֹ, *non prævalebis ei*, comp. Gen. xxxii. 26. נָפוֹל תִּפּוֹל with an emphatic *infin. absol.*: wholly fall. Instead of the אֹהֲבָיו, חֲכָמָיו are here named, or to speak more correctly, the friends of Haman are here called his wise men (magi). Even in v. 14 Haman's friends figure as those with whom he takes counsel concerning Mordochai, *i.e.* as his counsellors or advisers; hence it is very probable that there were magi among their number, who now "come forward as a *genus sapientum et doctorum* (Cicero, *divin.* i. 23)" (Berth.), and predict his overthrow in his contest with Mordochai. The ground of this prediction is stated: "If Mordochai is of the seed of the Jews," *i.e.* of Jewish descent, then after this preliminary fall a total fall is inevitable. Previously (v. 14) they had not hesitated to advise him to hang the insignificant Jew; but now that the insignificant Jew has become, as by a miracle, a man highly honoured by the king, the fact that the Jews are under the special protection of Providence is pressed upon them. *Ex fato populorum*, remarks Grotius, *de singulorum fatis judicabant. Judæi gravissime oppressi a Cyri temporibus contra spem omnem resurgere cœperant.* We cannot, however, regard as well founded the further remark: *de Amalecitis audierant oraculum esse, eos Judæorum manu perituros*, which Grotius, with most older expositors, derives from the Amalekite origin of Haman. The revival of the Jewish people since the times of Cyrus was sufficient to induce, in the minds of heathen who were attentive to the signs of the times, the persuasion that this nation enjoyed divine protection.—Ver. 14. During this conversation certain

courtiers had already arrived, who hastily brought Haman to the banquet of the queen, to which he would certainly go in a less happy state of mind than on the preceding day.

CHAP. VII.—HAMAN'S DOWNFALL AND RUIN.

At this second banquet the king again inquired of the queen what was her petition, when she entreated that her life and that of her people might be spared, for that she and her people were sold to destruction (vers. 1–4). The king, evidently shocked at such a petition, asked who was the originator of so evil a deed, and Esther named the wicked Haman as the enemy (vers. 5, 6). Full of indignation at such a crime, the king rose from the banquet and went into the garden; Haman then fell down before the queen to entreat for his life. When the king returned to the house, he saw Haman lying on the couch on which Esther was sitting, and thinking that he was offering violence to the queen, he passed sentence of death upon him, and caused him to be hanged on the tree he had erected for Mordochai (vers. 7–10).

Vers. 1–6. The king and Haman came to drink (לִשְׁתּוֹת), *i.e.* to partake of the מִשְׁתֶּה, in the queen's apartment.—Ver. 2. At this banquet of wine the king asked again on the second day, as he had done on the first (chap. v. 6): What is thy petition, Queen Esther, etc.? Esther then took courage to express her petition. After the usual introductory phrases (ver. 3 like v. 8), she replied: "Let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request." For, she adds as a justification and reason for such a petition, "we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. And if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had been silent, for the enemy is not worth the king's damage." In this request עַמִּי is a short expression for: the life of my people, and the preposition בְּ, the so-called בְּ *pretii*. The request is conceived of as the price which she offers or presents for her life and that of her people. The expression נִמְכַּרְנוּ, we are sold, is used by

Esther with reference to the offer of Haman to pay a large sum into the royal treasury for the extermination of the Jews, iii. 9, iv. 7. אִלּוּ, contracted after Aramæan usage from לוּ אִם, and occurring also Eccles. vi. 6, supposes a case, the realization of which is desired, but not to be expected, the matter being represented as already decided by the use of the perfect. The last clause, כִּי אֵין הַצָּר וגו׳, is by most expositors understood as a reference, on the part of Esther, to the financial loss which the king would incur by the extermination of the Jews. Thus Rambach, *e.g.*, following R. Sal. ben Melech, understands the meaning expressed to be: *hostis nullo modo æquare, compensare, resarcire potest pecunia sua damnum, quod rex ex nostro excidio patitur.* So also Cler. and others. The confirmatory clause would in this case refer not to הֶחֱרַשְׁתִּי, but to a negative notion needing completion: but I dare not be silent; and such completion is itself open to objection. To this must be added, that שָׁוָה in Kal constructed with בְּ does not signify *compensare*, to equalize, to make equal, but to be equal; consequently the Piel should be found here to justify the explanation proposed. שָׁוָה in Kal constructed with בְּ signifies to be of equal worth with something, to equal another thing in value. Hence Gesenius translates: the enemy does not equal the damage of the king, *i.e.* is not in a condition to compensate the damage. But neither when thus viewed does the sentence give any reason for Esther's statement, that she would have been silent, if the Jews had been sold for slaves. Hence we are constrained, with Bertheau, to take a different view of the words, and to give up the reference to financial loss. נֶזֶק, in the Targums, means not merely financial, but also bodily, personal damage; *e.g.* Ps. xci. 7, Gen. xxvi. 11, to do harm, 1 Chron. xvi. 22. Hence the phrase may be understood thus: For the enemy is not equal to, is not worth, the damage of the king, *i.e.* not worthy that I should annoy the king with my petition. Thus Esther says, ver. 4: The enemy has determined upon the total destruction of my people. If he only intended to bring upon them grievous oppression, even that most grievous oppression of slavery, I

would have been silent, for the enemy is not worthy that I should vex or annoy the king by my accusation.—Ver. 5. The king, whose indignation was excited by what he had just heard, asks with an agitation, shown by the repetition of the וַיֹּאמֶר: "Who is he, and where is he, whose heart hath filled him (whom his heart hath filled) to do so?" Evil thoughts proceed from the heart, and fill the man, and impel him to evil deeds: Isa. xliv. 20; Eccles. viii. 11; Matt. xv. 19. —Ver. 6. Esther replies: "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman." Then was Haman afraid before the king and the queen. נִבְעָת as in 1 Chron. xxi. 30, Dan. viii. 17.

Vers. 7–10. The king in his wrath arose from the banquet of wine, and went into the garden of the house (קָם is here a pregnant expression; and is also combined with אֶל-גִּנַּת); but Haman remained standing to beg for his life to Queen Esther (בִּקֵּשׁ עַל as in iv. 8), "for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king" (כָּלָה, completed, *i.e.* determined; comp. 1 Sam. xx. 7, 9, xxv. 17, and elsewhere); and hence that he had no mercy to expect from him, unless the queen should intercede for him.—Ver. 8. The king returned to the house, and found Haman falling (נֹפֵל as in Josh. viii. 10, Deut. xxi. 1, and elsewhere) at or on the couch on which Esther was (sitting), *i.e.* falling as a suppliant at her feet; and crediting Haman in the heat of his anger with the worst designs, he cried out: "Shall also violence be done to the queen before me in the house?" The *infin.* לִכְבּוֹשׁ after the interrogatory particle signifies: Is violence to be done, *i.e.* shall violence be done? as in 1 Chron. xv. 2 and elsewhere; comp. Ewald, § 237, *c.* כָּבַשׁ, to tread under foot, to subdue, used here in the more general sense, to offer violence. Without waiting for an explanation, the king, still more infuriated, passes sentence of death upon Haman. This is not given in so many words by the historian, but we are told immediately that: "as the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face." הַדָּבָר is not the speech of the king just reported, but the judicial sentence, the death warrant, *i.e.* the word to punish Haman with death. This is unmistakeably shown by the

further statement: they covered Haman's face. The subject is indefinite: the attendants present. To cover the face was indeed to begin to carry the sentence of death into execution. With respect to this custom, expositors appeal to Curtius, vi. 8. 22: *Philetam—capite velato in regiam adducunt;* and Cicero, *pro C. Rabirio* iv. 13: *I lictor, colliga manus, caput obnubito, arbori infelici suspendito.*—Ver. 9. Then said Harbonah (already mentioned i. 10), one of the eunuchs before the king, *i.e.* who held office before the king: "Behold also the tree which Haman made (comp. v. 14) stands in the house of Haman." גַּם points to the fact that the other eunuchs had already brought forward various particulars concerning Haman's crime. Mordochai, who had spoken good for the king, viz. when he gave information of the conspiracy, ii. 22, vi. 2. On this tree the king ordered that Haman should be hanged, and this sentence was executed without delay.—"And the king's wrath was pacified." With this remark the narrative of this occurrence is closed, and the history pursues its further course as follows.

CHAP. VIII.—MORDOCHAI ADVANCED TO HAMAN'S POSITION. COUNTER-EDICT FOR THE PRESERVATION OF JEWS.

The king bestowed the house of Haman on Esther, and advanced Mordochai to Haman's place of prime minister (vers. 1 and 2). Esther then earnestly besought the king for the abolition of the edict published by Haman against the Jews, and the king permitted her and Mordochai to send letters in the king's name to all the Jews in his kingdom, commanding them to stand for their life, and to slay their enemies, on the day appointed for their own extermination (vers. 3–14). These measures diffused great joy throughout the kingdom (vers. 15–17).

Vers. 1 and 2. By the execution of Haman, his property was confiscated, and the king decreed that the house of the Jews' enemy should be given to Esther. The "house of Haman" undoubtedly means the house with all that pertained to it. "And Mordochai came before the king, for Esther had

told him what he was to her," viz. her kinsman and foster-father, ii. 7. This information effected Mordochai's appearance before the king, *i.e.* his reception into the number of the high dignitaries who beheld the face of the king, *i.e.* were allowed personal access to him; comp. i. 10, 14, vii. 9. —Ver. 2. And the king took off his seal-ring which he had taken from Haman (comp. iii. 10), and gave it to Mordochai. הֶעֱבִיר מִן, to cause to go from some one, *i.e.* to take away. By this act Mordochai was advanced to the post of first minister of the king; comp. Gen. xli. 42, 1 Macc. vi. 15. The king's seal gave the force of law to royal edicts, the seal taking the place of the signature. See rem. on ver. 8 and iii. 10.

Vers. 3–14. The chief enemy of the Jews was now destroyed; but the edict, written in the king's name, sealed with the royal seal, and published in all the provinces of the kingdom, for the destruction of all the Jews on the 13th day of the twelfth month, was still in force, and having been issued in due legal form, could not, according to the laws of the Persians and Medes, be revoked. Queen Esther therefore entreated the king to annul the designs of Haman against the Jews. Vers. 3 and 4. "Esther spake again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and wept, and besought him to do away with (הֶעֱבִיר, to cause to depart) the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he devised against the Jews. And the king held out his golden sceptre towards Esther, and Esther arose and stood before the king." This verse gives a summary of the contents of Esther's speech, which is reported verbally in vers. 5 and 6, so that we must translate the imperfects וַתִּבְךְּ וַתִּתְחַנֵּן וַתִּפֹּל—וַתֹּאמֶר: She spoke before the king, falling at his feet and beseeching him with weeping, that he would do away with רָעַת הָמָן, the evil that Haman had done, and his device against the Jews. The king stretched out his sceptre (comp. chap. iv. 11) as a sign that he would graciously grant her petition; whereupon she arose, stood before the king, and made known her request. —Ver. 5. The introductory formula are in part similar to those used chap. i. 19, v. 4, 8, vii. 3; but the petition referring to a great and important matter, they are strength-

ened by two new phrases: "If the thing is advisable (כָּשֵׁר, proper, convenient, advantageous, a later word occurring again only Eccles. xi. 6, x. 10,—in ii. 21, iv. 4, 5, 10 of the same book, כְּשֵׁרוֹן) before the king, and if I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written (let a writing be issued, like chap. iii. 9), to frustrate (לְהָשִׁיב, *i.e.* to put out of force) the letters, the device of Haman . . . which he wrote to destroy the Jews, who are in all the provinces of the king." מַחֲשֶׁבֶת הָמָן, the device, the proposal of Haman, is added to הַסְּפָרִים, briefly to characterize the contents of the letters. On the matter itself, comp. iii. 8 sq. and 12 sq. "For how shall I endure to see the destruction of my people?" The verbs אוּכַל וְרָאִיתִי are so combined that the second is governed by the first, וְרָאִיתִי standing instead of the infinitive; comp. Ew., § 285, *c.* רָאָה cons. בְּ denotes an interested beholding, whether painful or joyous, of something; comp. Gen. xliv. 34. מוֹלַדְתִּי in parallelism with עַם denotes those who are of like descent, the family, members of a tribe.—Vers. 7 and 8. The king could not simply revoke the edict issued by Haman in due legal form, but, ready to perform the request of the queen, he first assures her of his good intentions, reminding her and Mordochai that he has given the house of Haman to Esther and hanged Haman, because he laid hand on the Jews (אֹתוֹ תָלוּ, him they have executed); and then grants them permission, as he had formerly done to Haman, to send letters to the Jews in the king's name, and sealed with the king's seal, and to write כַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם, "as seems good to you," *i.e.* to give in writing such orders as might in Esther's and Mordochai's judgment render the edict of Haman harmless. "For," he adds, "what is written in the king's name and sealed with his seal cannot be reversed." This confirmatory clause is added by the king with reference to the law in general, not as speaking of himself objectively as "the king." אֵין לְהָשִׁיב refers to Esther's request: יִכָּתֵב לְהָשִׁיב (ver. 5). וְנַחְתּוֹם, *infin. abs.* used instead of the *perfect.*—Vers. 9–14. These letters were prepared in the same manner as those of Haman (chap. iii. 12–15), on the 23d day of the third month, the month Sivan, and sent into all the pro-

vinces. "And it was written according to all that Mordochai commanded." They were sent to the Jews and to the satraps, etc., of the whole wide realm from India to Ethiopia (see i. 1), while those of Haman had been issued only to the satraps, etc. The rest coincides with chap. iii. 12. וַיִּכְתֹּב, and he (Mordochai) wrote. To show the speed with which the letters were despatched, (messengers) "on horseback, on coursers, government coursers, the sons of the stud," is added to בְּיַד הָרָצִים. רֶכֶשׁ is a collective, meaning swift horses, coursers; comp. 1 Kings v. 8. אֲחַשְׁתְּרָנִים (vers. 11 and 14) answers to the Old-Persian *kschatrana*, from *kschatra*, government, king, and means government, royal, or court studs. So Haug in Ewald's *bibl. Jahrb.* v. p. 154. The older explanation, mules, on the other hand, is founded on the modern Persian *estar*, which, to judge from the Sanscrit *açvatara*, must in ancient Persian have been *açpatara*. רַמָּכִים, *ἅπ. λεγ.* from רַמָּךְ, answering to the Syriac ܪܰܡܟܳܐ, herd, especially a herd of horses, and to the Arabic رِمَكَة, stud, is explained by Bertheau as a superlative form for the animal who excels the rest of the herd or stud in activity, perhaps the breeding stallion, while others understand it of the stud in general. The contents of the edict follow in vers. 11 and 12: "that the king allows the Jews in every city to assemble and to stand for their life (*i.e.* to fight for their lives, comp. Dan. xii. 1), to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish all the power (חֵיל, military power) of the people and province that should assault them, children and women, and to plunder their property, upon a certain day," etc. The appointed time is thus stated as in chap. iii. 13. The Jews were thus authorized to attack and destroy all enemies who should assault them on the day appointed for their extermination. Ver. 13 coincides with chap. iii. 14*b*, with this difference, that the Jews are to be ready on this day to avenge themselves on their enemies. Ver. 14 also is similar to chap. iii. 15, except that the expression is strengthened by an addition to הָרָצִים as in ver. 10, and by that of דְּחוּפִים, urged on, to מְבֻהָלִים, hastened, to point out the utmost despatch possible.

Vers. 15–17. The joy experienced throughout the kingdom at these measures. Ver. 15. After transacting with the king this measure so favourable to the Jews, Mordochai went out from the king in a garment of deep blue and white material (comp. i. 6), and with a great crown of gold, and a mantle of byssus and purple. תַּכְרִיךְ, ἅπ. λεγ., in the Aramæan תַּכְרִיכָא, a wide mantle or covering. The meaning is not, as Bertheau remarks, that he left the king in the garment which had been, according to chap. vi. 8 sq., presented to him, nor that he left him with fresh tokens of his favour, clothed in a garment, crown, and mantle just bestowed on him, but that he left him in a magnificent state garment, and otherwise festally apparelled, that he might thus show, even by his external appearance, the happiness of his heart. Of these remarks, the first and last are quite correct; the second, however, can by no means be so, because it affords no answer to the question how Mordochai had obtained crown and mantle during his stay with the king and in the royal palace. The garments in which Mordochai left the king are evidently the state garments of the first minister, which Mordochai received at his installation to his office, and, as such, no fresh token of royal favour, but only his actual induction in his new dignity, and a sign of this induction to all who saw him issue from the palace so adorned. "The city of Susa rejoiced and was glad," *i.e.* rejoiced for gladness. The city, *i.e.* its inhabitants on the whole.—Ver. 16. The Jews (*i.e.* in Susa, for those out of the city are not spoken of till ver. 17) had light and gladness, and delight and honour." אוֹרָה (this form occurs only here and Ps. cix. 12), light, is a figurative expression for prosperity. יְקָר, honour—in the joy manifested by the inhabitants of Susa at the prevention of the threatened destruction.—Ver. 17. And in every province and city . . . there was joy and a glad day, a feast day, comp. chap. ix. 19, 22, while Haman's edict had caused grief and lamentation, chap. iv. 3. "And many of the people of the land (*i.e.* of the heathen inhabitants of the Persian empire) became Jews, for the fear of the Jews fell upon them." מִתְיַהֲדִים, to confess oneself a Jew, to become a Jew, a denominative formed from יְהוּדִי,

occurs only here. On the confirmatory clause, comp. Ex. xv. 16, Deut. xi. 25. This conversion of many of the heathen to Judaism must not be explained only, as by Clericus and Grotius, of a change of religion on the part of the heathen, *ut sibi hoc modo securitatem et reginæ favorem pararent, metuentes potentiam Mardechæi.* This may have been the inducement with some of the inhabitants of Susa. But the majority certainly acted from more honourable motives, viz. a conviction, forced upon them by the unexpected turn of affairs in favour of the Jews, of the truth of the Jewish religion; and the power of that faith and trust in God manifested by the Jews, and so evidently justified by the fall of Haman and the promotion of Mordochai, contrasted with the vanity and misery of polytheism, to which even the heathen themselves were not blind. When we consider that the same motives in subsequent times, when the Jews as a nation were in a state of deepest humiliation, attracted the more earnest-minded of the heathen to the Jewish religion, and induced them to become proselytes, the fact here related will not appear surprising.

CHAP. IX.—THE JEWS AVENGED OF THEIR ENEMIES. THE FEAST OF PURIM INSTITUTED.

On the day appointed by both edicts, the Jews assembled in the towns and provinces of the kingdom to slay all who sought their hurt, and being supported by the royal officials, inflicted a great defeat upon their enemies (vers. 1–10). At the queen's desire, the king granted permission to the Jews in Susa to fight against their enemies on the following day also (vers. 11–15), while in the other towns and districts of the kingdom they fought for their lives only on the 13th of Adar; so that in these places they rested on the 14th, but in Susa not till the 15th, and consequently kept in the latter the one day, in the former the other, as a day of feasting and rejoicing (vers. 16–19). The observance of this day of resting as a festival, under the name of Purim, by all the Jews in the Persian monarchy, was then instituted by Esther and Mordochai (vers. 20–32).

Vers. 1–10. *The Jews avenged of their enemies.*—Ver. 1. In the twelfth month, on the thirteenth day of the same—the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities, etc. Several parenthetical clauses succeed this definition of time, so that the statement of what then took place does not follow till נִקְהֲלוּ, ver. 2. These parenthetical clauses state not only the meaning of the day just named, but also give a general notice of the conflict between the Jews and their enemies. The first runs: "when the word of the king drew nigh and his decree to be done," *i.e.* when the execution of the royal decree approached. The second is: "on the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have the mastery of them, and it was changed (*i.e.* the contrary occurred), that the Jews had the mastery over them that hated them." שָׁלַט בְּ, to rule, to have the mastery over. נֵהָפוֹךְ is *infin. abs.*, used instead of the *imperf.* הוּא is referred by Bertheau to יוֹם: the day was changed from a day of misfortune to a day of prosperity for the Jews, alluding to ver. 22; but it is not a change of the day which is here spoken of, but a change of the hope of the enemies into its opposite; hence we must regard הוּא as neuter: it was changed, *i.e.* the contrary occurred. The pronoun הֵמָּה serves to emphasize the subject; comp. Ewald, § 314, *a*, who in this and similar cases takes הוּא, הֵמָּה in the sense of *ipse, ipsi.*—Ver. 2. בְּעָרֵיהֶם, in their cities, *i.e.* the cities in which they dwelt in all the dominions of the king. לִשְׁלֹחַ יָד, to stretch out the hand (as also in ii. 21, iii. 6, for the purpose of killing) against those who sought their hurt, *i.e.* sought to destroy them. "And no one stood before them (עָמַד בִּפְנֵי, like Josh. x. 8, xxi. 42, and elsewhere), because the fear of them fell upon all people (see rem. on viii. 17). And all the rulers of the provinces, and the satraps and governors (comp. viii. 9), and those that did the king's business (עֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה, see rem. on iii. 9), supported the Jews (נָשְׂאוּ like Ezra i. 4), because the fear of Mordochai fell upon them."—Ver. 4. "For Mordochai was great in the king's house (was much esteemed by the king), and his fame went through all the provinces (שְׁמֻעוֹ as in Josh. vi. 27, ix. 9, Jer. vi. 24); for this man Mordochai became continually greater;" comp. 2 Chron.

xvii. 12, where the partic. גֹּדֵל stands instead of the infin. abs. גָּדוֹל.—Ver. 5. Thus supported, the Jews inflicted defeat upon their enemies with the sword, and with slaughter and destruction. הִכָּה with בְּ, to deal a blow upon or against some one, to cause or bring about upon enemies a defeat; comp. *e.g.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 10, xxiv. 17, Num. xxii. 6. The notion is strengthened by מַכַּת־חֶרֶב וגו׳, literally, to strike a stroke of the sword, and of slaughter, and of destruction, in accordance with the decree, viii. 11. "And did according to their will to those that hated them," *i.e.* retaliated upon their enemies at their discretion.—Ver. 6. In the citadel of Susa they destroyed (in round numbers) 500 men.—Vers. 7–10. Also they slew the ten sons of Haman, whose names are given, 7–9;[1] but on the spoil they laid not their hand, though this was allowed to them, viii. 11, as it had been commanded to their enemies by Haman's edict, iii. 13, *ut ostenderent, se non aliud quam vitæ suæ incolumitatem quærere; hanc enim perdere volebant ii qui occidebantur.* C. a Lapide.

Vers. 11–19. When on the same day an account was given to the king of the result of the conflict, and the number of those slain in Susa reported, he announced to Queen Esther: the Jews have slain in the citadel of Susa 500 men and the ten sons of Haman; "what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces?" *i.e.* if they have killed 500 men in Susa, how many may they not have slain in other parts of the kingdom? and then asked her what else she wished or required. With respect to the words, comp. v. 6 and vii. 2.

[1] The peculiar position of the names of the sons of Haman in editions of the Bible, grounded as it is upon the ancient mode of writing, must originally have been intended merely to give prominence to the names, and facilitate their computation. The later Rabbis, however, have endeavoured to discover therein some deeper meaning. This mode of writing the names has been said to be *signum voti, ut a ruina sua nunquam amplius resurgant*, or also a sign *quod sicut hi decem filii in linea perpendiculari, unus supra alterum, suspensi fuerint.* Comp. Buxtorf, *Synagoga jud.* pp. 157–159 of the Basle edit. 1580. What is indicated by the smaller forms of the letters ת, שׁ, and ו, in the first, seventh, and tenth names, is not known; the larger ו in the tenth may have been meant to give prominence, by the character employed, to this name as the last.

—Ver. 13. Esther requested: "let it be granted to the Jews which are in Susa to do to-morrow also according to the decree of to-day (*i.e.* exactly as to-day), and let the ten sons of Haman be hanged upon the tree," *i.e.* their dead bodies nailed on crosses—*majoris infamiæ causa*, according to Hebrew and Persian custom; comp. Deut. xxi. 22 and the explanation of Ezra vi. 11. On the motive for this request, see above, p. 310.—Ver. 14. The king commanded it so to be done. "Then was a decree given at Susa, and they hanged the ten sons of Haman." The decree given in Susa does not refer to the hanging of the sons of Haman, but to the permission given to the Jews to fight against their enemies on the morrow also. This is required not only by a comparison of viii. 13, but also by the connection of the present verse; for in consequence of this decree the Jews assembled on the 14th Adar (comp. וַיִּקָּהֲלוּ, then they assembled themselves, ver. 15), while the hanging of the sons of Haman, on the contrary, is related in an accessory clause by a simple perfect, תְּלוּ.—Ver. 15. On this second day the Jews slew 300 more; comp. ver. 10.—Ver. 16. The rest of the Jews in the provinces, *i.e.* the Jews in the other parts of the kingdom, assembled themselves and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes 75,000, but upon the spoil they laid not their hand: עָמַד עַל like viii. 11. The וְנוּחַ מֵאוֹיְבֵיהֶם inserted between וְעָמַד עַל נ׳ and וְהָרוֹג is striking; we should rather have expected the resting or having rest from their enemies after the death of the latter, as in vers. 17 and 18, where this is plainly stated to have taken place on the day after the slaughter. The position of these words is only explained by the consideration, that the narrator desired at once to point out how the matter ended. The narrative continues in the *infin. abs.* instead of expressing this clause by the *infin. constr.*, and so causing it to be governed by what precedes. Thus—as Ew. § 351, *c*, remarks—all the possible hues of the sentence fade into this grey and formless termination (viz. the use of the *infin. absol.* instead of the *verb. fin.*). This inaccuracy of diction does not justify us, however, in assuming that we have here an interpolation or an alteration in the

text. The statement of the day is given in ver. 17, and then the clause following is again added in the *inf. absol.*: "and they rested on the 14th day of the same (of Adar), and made it a day of feasting and gladness."—Ver. 18. The Jews in Susa, on the other hand, who were both on the 13th and 14th Adar still fighting against their enemies, and did not rest till the 15th, made this latter their day of rejoicing.—In ver. 19 it is again stated that the Jews in the country towns and villages made the 14th their day of gladness, and this statement is appended by עַל־כֵּן to make this appear the result of what precedes. The *Chethiv* הַפְּרוֹזִים is perhaps an Aramaic expression for פְּרָזִים, Deut. iii. 5 and 1 Sam. vi. 18. פְּרוֹזִי means the inhabitants of the open, *i.e.* unfortified, towns and villages of the plains in contrast to the fortified capital; see on Deut. iii. 5. On פְּרָזוֹת, compare Ezek. xxxviii. 11, Zech. ii. 8. מִשְׁלוֹחַ מָנוֹת וגו', and of mutual sending of gifts, *i.e.* portions of food; comp. Neh. viii. 10, 12.

Vers. 20–32. The feast of Purim instituted by letters from Mordochai and Esther. Ver. 20. Mordochai wrote these things, and sent letters to all the Jews, etc. הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה does not mean the contents of the present book; but the events of the last days, especially the fact that the Jews, after overcoming their enemies, rested in Susa on the 15th, in the other provinces on the 14th Adar, and kept these days as days of rejoicing. This is obvious from the object of these letters, ver. 21: לְקַיֵּם עֲלֵיהֶם וגו', to appoint among them "that they should keep the 14th day of the month Adar and the 15th day of the same yearly, as the days on which the Jews rested from their enemies, and as the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a glad day, that they should keep them as days of feasting and joy, and of mutual sending of portions one to another, and gifts to the poor." עָשָׂה יוֹם, to keep, to celebrate a day. The לִהְיוֹת עֹשִׂים, ver. 21, is after long parentheses taken up again in לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם. קַיֵּם, to establish a matter, to authorize it, comp. Ruth iv. 7. Both the 14th and 15th Adar were made festivals because the Jews on them had rest from their enemies, and celebrated this rest by feasting, some on the

former, some on the latter day.—Ver. 23. And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordochai had written to them. They had begun, as ver. 22 tells us, by keeping both days, and Mordochai wrote to them that they should make this an annual custom. This they agreed to do in consequence of Mordochai's letters. The reason of their so doing is given in vers. 24 and 25, and the name of this festival is explained, ver. 26, by a brief recapitulation of the events which gave rise to it. Then follows, vers. 26*b* and 27, another wordy statement of the fact, that it was by reason of this letter, and on account of what they had seen, *i.e.* experienced, that the annual celebration of this feast was instituted for a perpetual memorial to all Jews at all times (vers. 28 and 29).—Ver. 24. For Haman, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them (comp. iii. 1, 6 sq.), and had cast Pur, that is the lot (see on iii. 7), to consume them and to destroy them. הָמַם, mostly used of the discomfiture with which God destroys the enemies, Ex. xiv. 24, Deut. ii. 15, and elsewhere.—Ver. 25. וּבְבֹאָהּ, and when it (the matter), not when she, Esther, came before the king,—for Esther is not named in the context,—he commanded by letters (viii. 8), *i.e.* he gave the written order: let the wicked device which he devised against the Jews return upon his own head; and they hanged him and his sons upon the tree.—Ver. 26. Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name Pur. This first עַל־כֵּן refers to what precedes and states the reason, resulting from what has just been mentioned, why this festival received the name of *Purim*. With the second עַל־כֵּן begins a new sentence which reaches to ver. 28, and explains how it happened that these feast-days became a general observance with all Jews; namely, that because of all the words of this letter (of Mordochai, ver. 20), and of what they had seen concerning the matter (עַל־דָּבָר, concerning so and so), and what had come upon them (therefore for two reasons: (1) because of the written injunction of Mordochai; and (2) because they had themselves experienced this event), the Jews established, and took upon themselves, their descendants, and all who should join

themselves unto them (proselytes), so that it should not fail (*i.e.* inviolably), to keep (to celebrate) these two days according to the writing concerning them and the time appointed thereby year by year.—Ver. 28. And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and these days of Purim are not to pass away among the Jews, nor their remembrance to cease among their seed. The participles נִזְכָּרִים וְנַעֲשִׂים still depend on לִהְיוֹת, ver. 27. Not till the last clause does the construction change in לֹא יַעֲבְרוּ to the *temp. finit.* וְלֹא יַעֲבוֹר is a periphrasis of the adverb: imperishably, inviolably. כִּכְתָבָם, *secundum scriptum eorum, i.e.* as Mordochai had written concerning them (ver. 23). כִּזְמַנָּם, as he had appointed their time. סוּף מִן, to come to an end from, *i.e.* to cease among their descendents.

Vers. 29–32. A second letter from Queen Esther and Mordochai to appoint fasting and lamentation on the days of Purim. Ver. 29. And Esther the queen and Mordochai the Jew wrote with all strength, that is very forcibly, to appoint this second letter concerning Purim, *i.e.* to give to the contents of this second letter the force of law. הַזֹּאת refers to what follows, in which the contents of the letter are briefly intimated. The letter is called הַשֵּׁנִית with reference to the first letter sent by Mordochai, ver. 20 sq.—Ver. 30. And he (Mordochai) sent letters, *i.e.* copies of the writing mentioned ver. 29, to all the Jews in the 127 provinces (which formed) the kingdom of Ahashverosh, words of peace and truth, *i.e.* letters containing words of peace and truth (ver. 31), to appoint these days of Purim in their portions of time according as Mordochai the Jew and Esther the queen had appointed, and as they (the Jews) had appointed for themselves and for their descendants, the things (or words = precepts) of the fastings and their lamentations. בִּזְמַנֵּיהֶם, in their appointed times; as the suffix relates to the days of Purim, the זְמַנִּים can mean only portions of time in these days. The sense of vers. 29–31 is as follows: According to the injunctions of Esther and Mordochai, the Jews appointed for themselves and their descendants times also of

fasting and lamentation in the days of Purim. To make this appointment binding upon all the Jews in all provinces of the Persian monarchy, Esther and Mordochai published a second letter, which was sent by Mordochai throughout the whole realm of King Ahashverosh. To this is added, ver. 32, that the decree of Esther appointed these matters of Purim, i.e. the injunction mentioned vers. 29–31, also to fast and weep during these days, and it was written in the book. הַסֵּפֶר, the book in which this decree was written, cannot mean the writing of Esther mentioned ver. 29, but some written document concerning Purim which has not come down to us, though used as an authority by the author of the present book. The times when the fasting and lamentation were to take place in the days of Purim, are not stated in this verse; this could, however, only be on the day which Haman had appointed for the extermination of the Jews, viz. the 13th Adar. This day is kept by the Jews as תַּעֲנִית אֶסְתֵּר, Esther's fast.[1]

CHAP. X.—THE POWER AND GREATNESS OF MORDOCHAI.

Ver. 1. And King Ahashverosh laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea. Ver. 2. And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the statement of the greatness of Mordochai to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? The *Chethiv* אחשׁרשׁ is a clerical error for אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ. The word מַס, service,

[1] According to 2 Macc. xv. 36, the victory over Nicanor was to be celebrated on the 13th Adar, but, according to a note of Dr. Cassel in Grimm's *kurzgef. exeget. Handb. zu den Apokryphen*, on 2 Macc. xv. 36, the festival of Nicanor is mentioned in Jewish writings, as *Megillat Taanit*, c. 12, in the Babylonian Talmud, *tr. Taanit*, f. 18*b*, in *Massechet Sofrim* 17, 4, but has been by no means observed for at least the last thousand years. The book Scheiltot of R. Acha (in the 9th century) speaks of the 13th Adar as a fast-day in memory of the fast of Esther, while even at the time of the Talmud the "Fast of Esther" is spoken of as a three days fast, kept, however, after the feast of Purim. From all this it is obvious, that a diversity of opinions prevailed among the Rabbis concerning the time of this fast of Esther.

here stands for tribute. As the provinces of the kingdom paid the imposts for the most part in natural produce, which they had reared or obtained by the labour of their hands, their labour (agriculture, cattle-keeping, etc.) was to a certain extent service rendered to the king. The matter of ver. 1 seems extraneous to the contents of our book, which has hitherto communicated only such information concerning Ahashverosh as was necessary for the complete understanding of the feast of Purim. "It seems"—remarks Bertheau—"as though the historian had intended to tell in some further particulars concerning the greatness of King Ahashverosh, for the sake of giving his readers a more accurate notion of the influential position and the agency of Mordochai, the hero of his book, who, according to ix. 4, waxed greater and greater; but then gave up his intention, and contented himself with referring to the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia, which contained information of both the power and might of Ahashverosh and the greatness of Mordochai." There is not, however, the slightest probability in such a conjecture. This matter may be simply explained by the circumstance, that the author of this book was using as an authority the book of the chronicles alluded to in ver. 2, and is quite analogous with the mode observed in the books of Kings and Chronicles by historians both of Babylonian and post-Babylonian days, who quote from the documents they make use of such events only as seem to them important with regard to the plan of their own work, and then at the close of each reign refer to the documents themselves, in which more may be found concerning the acts of the kings, at the same time frequently adding supplementary information from these sources,—comp. *e.g.* 1 Kings xiv. 30, xv. 7, 23, 32, xxii. 47–50, 2 Kings xv. 37, 2 Chron. xii. 15,—with this difference only, that in these instances the supplementary notices follow the mention of the documents, while in the present book the notice precedes the citation. As, however, this book opened with a description of the power and glory of King Ahashverosh, but yet only mentioned so

rning this ruler of 127 provinces as was connected with the history of the Jews, its author, before referring to his authorities, gives at its close the information contained in ver. 1, from the book of the chronicles of the kingdom, in which probably it was connected with a particular description of the power and greatness of Ahashverosh, and probably of the wars in which he engaged, for the sake of briefly intimating at the conclusion whence the king derived the means for keeping up the splendour described at the commencement of the book. This book of the chronicles contained accounts not only of the power and might of Ahashverosh, but also a פָּרָשָׁה, a plain statement or accurate representation of the greatness of Mordochai wherewith the king had made him great, *i.e.* to which he had advanced him, and therefore of the honours of the individual to whom the Jews were indebted for their preservation. On this account is it referred to. For Mordochai was next to the king, *i.e.* prime minister of the king (מִשְׁנֶה, comp. 2 Chron. xxviii. 7), and great among the Jews and acceptable to the multitude of his brethren, *i.e.* he was also a great man among the Jews and was beloved and esteemed by all his fellow-countrymen (on רָצוּי, comp. Deut. xxiii. 24), seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his race. This description of Mordochai's position with respect both to the king and his own people has, as expressive of an exalted frame of mind, a rhetorical and poetic tinge. Hence it contains such expressions as רֹב אֶחָיו, the fulness of his brethren, דֹּרֵשׁ טוֹב; comp. Ps. cxxii. 9, Jer. xxxviii. 4. On דֹּבֵר שָׁלוֹם, comp. Ps. lxxxv. 9, xxxv. 20, xxviii. 3. זַרְעוֹ in parallelism with עַמּוֹ is not the descendants of Mordochai, or his people, but his race. Comp. on this signification of זֶרַע, 2 Kings xi. 1, Isa. lxi. 9. The meaning of the two last phrases is: Mordochai procured both by word and deed the good and prosperity of his people. And this is the way in which honour and fortune are attained, the way inculcated by the author of the 34th Psalm in vers. 13–15, when teaching the fear of the Lord.

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